STAR TREK™

ROLEPLAYING GAME

MIRROR UNIVERSE

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ROLEPLAYING GAME

MIRROR UNIVERSE:
THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

CREDITS

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MIRROR UNIVERSE

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

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MIRROR UNIVERSE

THE TWISTED REFLECTION

THE VISION IN THE MIRROR

The first and most important thing for players and Narrators to realize about the Mirror Universe is that it is not the Federation Universe we all know and love. The Mirror Universe gleams with unfettered ambition, where the darkest elements of Human (and alien) nature rule the day.

By dramatic fiat, the Mirror Universe encourages villainy and rewards ambition. The ideals of community, justice and friendship often fail here. Players and Narrators alike must realize that the Mirror Universe is not a only a squalid place, but a largely irredeemable one. Story dictates to nature here: Regardless of the best intentions of the players, the Mirror Universe will always be moody, treacherous and ultimately destructive in the end.

AXIOMS OF THE MIRROR UNIVERSE

Dramatically, the four axioms included here work as linchpins to the Mirror Universe. Narrators running a Federation Universe Crew through an episode or two in the Mirror Universe should stress the differences in axioms between the two settings. Both sides must remember that the Mirror Universe's very nature conspires to make these dangerous and often terrible things true, often at the expense of the players' characters. Characters used to the Federation Universe may not have the innately treacherous nature necessary to Mirror Universe survival, while natives of the dark reflection are enemies to one another just as dangerous as any outside adversary.

Cinematic Action

The Mirror Universe is a place of cinematic action, where the rule is "do unto others *before* they do unto you." The Mirror Universe is even more action-packed than the Federation Universe because in addition to outside threats, there is always the concern of danger from within the Crew, from one's own subordinates or allies. Everyone in the Mirror Universe is a potential enemy, and should be treated accordingly.

Also, the inhabitants of the Mirror Universe don't concern themselves with concepts like the Federation Prime Directive. The Prime Directive of the Imperial Starfleet is "maintain terror," and "negotiation" proceeds at knife (or phaser) point. Landing parties don't meet peacefully with new species; they deliver an ultimatum, then kill anyone who fails to cooperate. Alliances, personal or otherwise, are a matter of convenience, to be discarded at the first opportunity. Treachery is everywhere.

Like the Federation Universe, technology in the Mirror Universe exists to support the needs of a good, dramatic story. Weapons are spectacular and used often. Everyone goes armed, ready for trouble at any moment. Devices like agonizers and agony booths exist to punish failure. The technology of the underdogs is always inferior, clunky, and prone to breaking down. The technology controlled by the aggressors is superior, advanced, and coldly efficient. The most powerful people control secret super-technologies like the Tantalus Field (see page 16). In all cases, technology is simply a tool to express the axioms of the setting.

Human Action and Free Will

In the Mirror Universe, individuals can and do make a difference. Indeed, they're they only thing that ever does make a difference. The ability to impose one's will on others is the goal of nearly everyone in the Mirror Universe. Individual actions are important in the overall scheme of things.

Vast, impersonal forces exist in the background of the setting. Nations like the Empire and the Alliance oppress vast populations, and carry out massive wars of conquest. But the real action of the setting happens on the personal level. Episodes focus not on the power of the Empire, but the ambition of a single starship captain and his quest for power and glory; not on the politics of the Alliance, but the actions of the Intendant of Terok Nor and how she deals with the Humans under her "tender care." Likewise, the actions that decide the fate of millions spring from individuals. Garth of Izar rose to power through his own efforts. Spock single-handedly changed the course of the Empire and brought about its destruction.

Of course, the key difference between the Mirror Universe and the Federation Universe is that things like the greater good seldom motivate people in the Mirror Universe. They direct their free will toward goals like gaining personal power and the destruction of their enemies. A would-be Emperor might believe that his rise to power is "for the greater good," but he's certainly not going to make sacrifices to benefit anyone other than himself.

Individual Competence

In addition to having the ability to chart their own destinies, individuals in the Mirror Universe are highly competent. This is even truer than it is in the Federation Universe, since the Mirror Universe has a harsh way of weeding out the incompetent: they end up dead. Occasionally enslaved, but mostly dead. Incompetents never make it far enough to actually gain any real power.

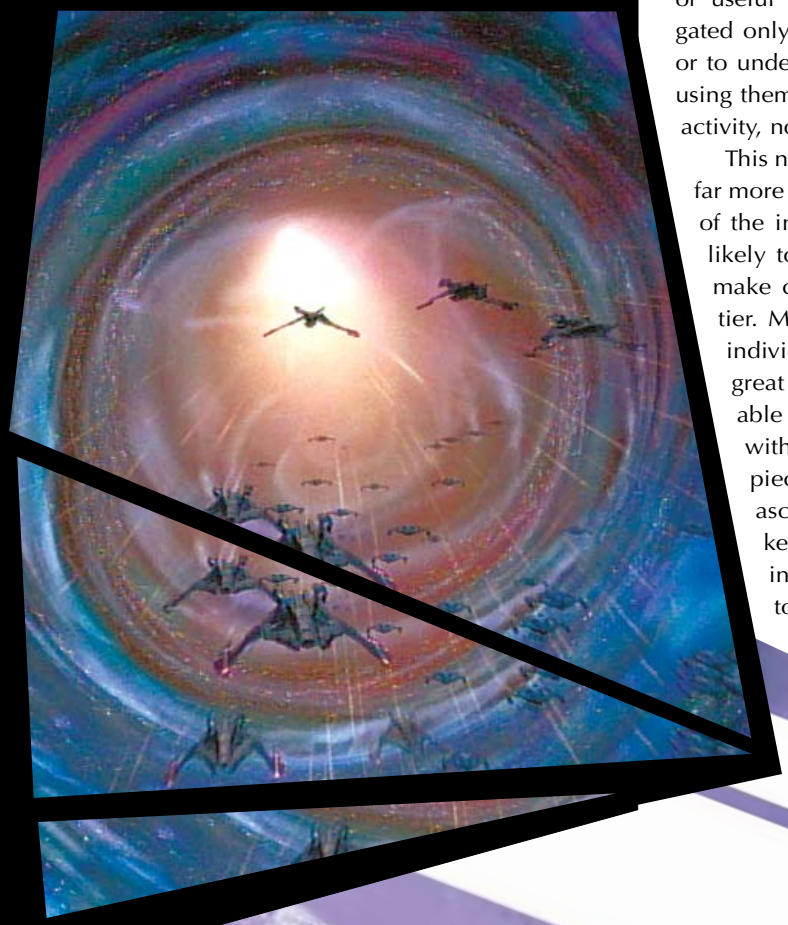
Of course the competence displayed by individuals in the Mirror Universe differs from that found in the Federation Universe. Federation Starfleet officers and other individuals devote themselves to personal betterment for its own sake. They pursue art, music, and intellectual hobbies like archeology alongside athletics and career training. Personal development in the Mirror Universe is focused entirely on the acquisition and use of power. Imperial Starfleet officers are only interested in art and archeology as an ability to appraise stolen art treasures and help locate alien ruins that might contain useful technology. Literature and philosophy aren't studied for their own sake, but for the ability to impress others, and perhaps to learn enough about Human nature to help manipulate people. Machiavelli's *The Prince,* or Shakespeare's *Comical History of Richard III* embody the Mirror Universe's idea of "great literature."

Individual competence is also important to Mirror Universe denizens because the only person you can ever really trust in the Mirror Universe is yourself. No matter how extensive a network of agents and underlings a person may have, no matter how many allies, if the individual is incapable of taking care of himself, he inevitably ends up dead at the hands of one of his "trusted friends."

Triumph of Evil

This is the key axiom of the Mirror Universe. There is nothing and no one that can stand against the application of sufficient skill, determination, and treachery. Sooner or later, ambition and self-aggrandizement always triumph in the Mirror Universe. Individuals fall to betrayal or plots by their underlings. Rebels are sought out and crushed by the power of the Empire—or the rebels themselves become a new regime of terror. The softhearted yield to the might of the strong willed. The Terran Empire grew and prospered following this axiom. When the Empire abandoned its course of conquest, it was crushed by the Alliance, which took its place. Attempts at reform and rebellion have created temporary change, but nothing has altered the basic view that power is the ultimate goal in life, and that the strong must rule the weak.

One important factor affecting this axiom is its occasional contact with the Federation Universe. In that case, the power of the Human spirit, acting in accordance with the greater good, always triumphs over evil. That is why nearly all the "good" that has happened in the Mirror Universe has been a direct result of the intervention of people from the Federation Universe. Mirror Universe people are simply incapable of acting selflessly for the greater good. It may be that the influence of Federation Universe individuals like James Kirk and Julian Bashir may lead to true change in the nature of the Mirror Universe eventually, but it hasn't happened yet.



Themes of the Mirror Universe

The axioms are the basic laws that govern stories in the Mirror Universe. Each story showcases these axioms in some way, both to provide dramatic effect and to highlight the differences between the Mirror and Federation Universes. Themes provide the "why?" of the story, while the axioms describe *how* things happen in the Mirror Universe. The theme thus provides the driving motivation of the story itself.

Not every story has to have a theme, of course. Episodes in the Mirror Universe can consist of the Crew killing their enemies, gathering booty, and plotting the demise of their associates, but themes serve to enhance the story and give it deeper meaning. Themes also help hold a series together and make it more than just one "phaser 'em dead" story after another.

Exploration and Conquest

The missions of vessels belonging to the Imperial Starfleet, or the Alliance fleet, are as much about personal gain as they are about seeking out new worlds. The Empire and the Alliance explore solely to find new worlds to conquer. They make contact with new species and civilizations to take control of them, and loot whatever valuable resources they might have. Planets are only of interest based on their value as targets. Archeological ruins are explored only to find valuable or useful artifacts. Unusual phenomena are investigated only to discover how to use them as weapons, or to understand them enough to prevent rebels from using them against you. Exploration is a purely selfish activity, not a quest for knowledge for its own sake.

This not only serves the expansion of the state, but far more importantly, it increases the personal power of the individuals involved. A skilled conqueror is likely to parlay his or her skills into the ability to make conquests at home as well as on the frontier. Mirror Universe history records a number of individuals whose personal power became so great as a result of their conquests that they were able to seize positions of power for themselves with ease. Discovery of a unique resource or piece of information can be the key to personal ascension. Of course, it can also become the key to personal destruction, if the secret falls into the wrong hands, or if allies are willing to betray you in order to seize your discovery for themselves.

Not all exploration and conquest stories have to be about new worlds or alien cultures. The Crew can also explore the labyrinthine corridors of power, dig up carefully hidden conspiracies (against the crew or others), discover and entice new allies, and conquer enemies at home just as well as they can explore in the depths of space. It is often possible to combine the two types of exploration together into a single story.

Self-Aggrandizement

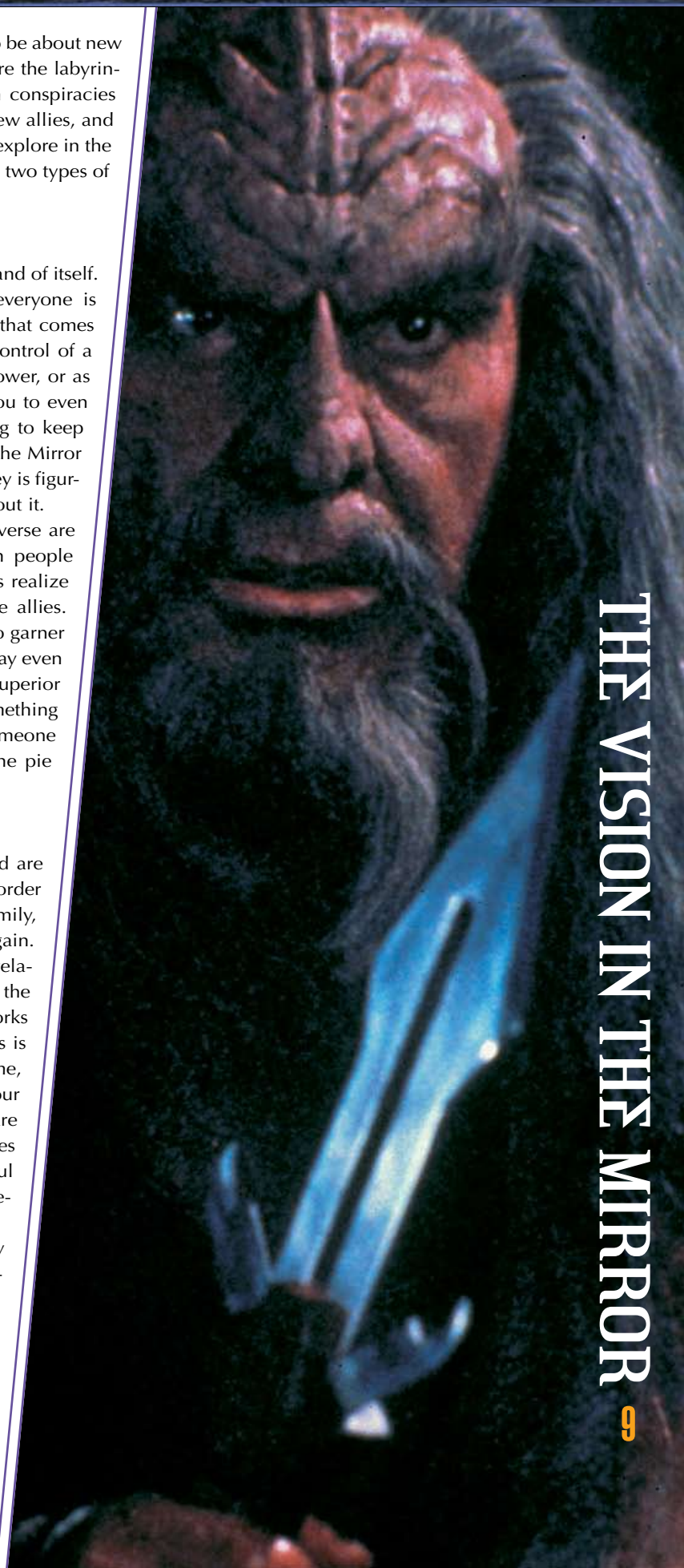
The desire for personal gain is also a theme in and of itself. Selfishness pervades the Mirror Universe, and everyone is motivated by a desire for personal power and all that comes with it. This theme can be as simple as seizing control of a new world or resource to add to your personal power, or as complex as an apparent sacrifice that can lead you to even greater gains in the long run. The important thing to keep in mind is the "angle." Nobody does anything in the Mirror Universe unless it benefits him in some way. The key is figuring out how, before it's too late to do anything about it.

Although all the inhabitants of the Mirror Universe are ultimately out for themselves, that doesn't mean people can't work together. For one thing, the smart ones realize there's strength in numbers and it's good to have allies. Also, the weak tend to follow the strong, hoping to garner a few crumbs of power. Patient and careful allies may even be able to gather enough power to topple their superior and take his place. As long as everyone gets something out of the deal, things work smoothly. It's when someone inevitably decides they want a bigger piece of the pie that it starts getting tricky.

Dilemmas of Power

People in the Mirror Universe seek power, and are usually willing to do whatever they have to in order to get ahead. This includes betraying friends, family, or other allegiances in the name of personal gain. Ironically, one needs to cultivate such personal relationships in order to gain power, so people in the Mirror Universe are constantly building up networks of allies, knowing that everyone in these networks is a potential traitor. The more powerful you become, the more complex, and potentially treacherous, your network of agents and allies becomes. Those who are in the strongest positions of power are also the ones who present the most tempting targets, so powerful characters have to spend considerable time safeguarding their position.

Episodes involving dilemmas of power primarily focus on roleplaying and dialogue between characters. Such leaders seek to maintain their useful relationships and protect their own positions while others scheme against them and look toward personal advancement, usually at the expense of those superiors. The Narrator can use this theme to foster a certain amount of group unity, by presenting an outside enemy and forcing the Crew to band together for mutual protection (See



MIRROR UNIVERSE THEMES

Here are some story ideas that demonstrate some of the common Mirror Universe themes, and how they differ from their Federation Universe counterparts:

EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST

- The Crew visits a new, unexplored, planet and must determine if it is worth conquering and how best to go about it.
- The Crew encounters a new life-form. Is it a possible threat to be destroyed or a possible asset they can use?
- A member of the Crew discovers a plot against him or her. Who is behind it, and why? More importantly, is it an erstwhile ally, and how will it affect the individual's network of "trusted allies"?
- The Crew hears about the promise of powerful alien technology in a lost ruin. Do they pursue it (and if not, why?), and who seizes control of it?

SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT

- A Crewmember is "offered" a dangerous mission. It has the potential for personal gain if successful, but disaster—blame, maiming or the exposure of personal weaknesses or conspiracies—if something goes wrong.
- A breakdown in ship or station systems endangers the Crew. Was it sabotage? How can the Crew come together to fix the problem when they don't know who caused it and who they can trust?
- A Crewmember is threatened by an alien virus or infection. Is it an accident or an assassination attempt? Does the Crewmember trust the medical officer or look for a cure on his own?
- The Crew spies or enters into a false alliance with a potential enemy in order to learn more about his plans and resources before moving against him.
- A Crewmember plots the assassination of a superior officer to advance in rank.

DILEMMAS OF POWER

- The Crew is offered the opportunity to assist a senior officer in a plot to overthrow his superior. Is it a genuine offer or some sort of trick? How will the Crew insulate themselves from blame if the attempt fails?
- A Crewmember gains access to a "treasure map" that leads to some valuable resource. Trouble is, he can't find it alone. Who does he trust enough to ask for help and how much does he tell them?
- The Crew is dealing with a new and hostile species. Does the Crew seek to destroy them or try to cultivate them as useful (if dangerous) allies?
- A superior officer is behaving strangely. Does the Crew turn against him, or is his odd behavior some sort of test or trick to expose disloyalty among the Crew?

FREE WILL

- The Crew is captured by enemies and must cooperate in order to escape. In the fashion of the Prisoner's Dilemma, each individual Crewmember has the chance to make a lucrative escape if he manages to betray the rest while they support him—but if more than one plots treachery, they are all doomed to failure.
- A Crewmember is given the authority to decide an important matter that may affect the Empire, such as wiping out a new race or choosing to conquer them.
- An omnipotent being toys with the Crew, enforcing its will on them, until they surrender. It loses interest when they choose not to "play."

MIGHT MAKES RIGHT

- The Crew is assigned to destroy a city or colony as an example to a world that has defied the Empire.
- A new world must be conquered and brought under control.
- A seemingly weak or undeveloped civilization secretly holds the key to a great source of power (whether or not they know it).
- A Crewmember uses a newly acquired resource (from blackmail to alien technology) to advance in rank. How does the rest of the Crew react?

Sodalities, p. 35). On the other hand, Narrators can also use this theme to foster more conflict within the Crew, as they plot and scheme against each other. (For advice on juggling this, see Chapter Fifteen, The Mirror Toolkit.)

Free Will

In many ways, the Mirror Universe is a place of ultimate free will, where you are only limited by your personal power when it comes to getting your own way and imposing your will on others. Of course, everyone is trying to achieve "free will" at the same time you are, and the dynamics of power say that only a few are going to climb high enough to have complete free will, while the majority are bound to the will of those few who rule. The key is to become one of the few rather than the majority. Stories involving this theme are about the struggle to gather the power you need to carry out your will, instead of carrying out somebody else's.

Free will is also about decision-making, and the individual decisions of people affect the course of history in the Mirror Universe. Your choices decide whether you succeed or fail, and certain choices can affect things for everyone. The more power you have, the more your choices matter, because they have the potential to affect everyone. If a low-ranking Imperial Officer makes a poor choice and dies, then he's the one who feels the most direct consequences of that bad choice. If the Emperor makes a poor choice, then the entire Empire suffers. Characters in the Mirror Universe value their free will even more than their Federation counterparts—it's all that they can depend on.

Might Makes Right

In the Mirror Universe, free will and "legitimacy" rest in the hands of those with the power to claim them. The Emperor is always right because he says so, and because he has the power to back up what he says. Mirror Universe denizens see no hypocrisy in this. In fact, they're very open and honest about it. To their point of view, it is more hypocritical to claim that the opinions of the powerless masses matter in the slightest.

Power rightfully belongs to whoever can seize it and continue to wield it. If you are foolish enough to let down your guard, even for an instant, then you deserve exactly what's coming to you. Of course, if you are foolish enough to attack someone with agents capable of avenging his death, then you also deserve what's coming to you. A person who advances through ruthless, careful planning and action is to be admired and feared, and ultimately plotted against.

MIRROR PHYSICS

The Mirror Universe is a curious place. By many of the standards known to Federation science it should not even exist at all, yet it does. Not only that, but it remains remarkably similar to the Federation Universe, down to duplicates of individual people. The Federation's few contacts with the Mirror Universe have given scientists only a limited understanding of the physics involved in the creation and sustaining of such a parallel universe. This chapter covers where the Mirror Universe "is" in relation to the Federation Universe, how to get there, and (more important from a Federation standpoint) how to get back.

The Mirror Universe exists for the sake of drama. While any number of justifications could potentially explain the Mirror Universe, it's really a place where we can let loose, play out what would happen if our idealized heroes were really villains, and see the consequences of an advanced science fiction universe where terror, not enlightenment, rules the day. Ultimately, that's why all the rules of the Mirror Universe lead to wicked drama: Because we say so. It's only made more interesting by the participants' ignorance of the fact, as they struggle futilely against axioms that they cannot overthrow. Except, of course, when our own heroes of hope and destiny intervene—when the idealism of the Federation Universe collides with its wretched counterpart. *That's* where the most interesting stories take place.

THE CONTINUUM

The Mirror Universe, like all parallel timelines, is believed to lie parallel to the Federation Universe in a six-dimensional continuum: three dimensions of space, and three of time. The dimensions of space (height, width, and depth) are familiar. The linear motion of time (past-present-future) can be considered one "dimension" of time. Time's other dimensions are made up of probability fields that are the "height" and "width" of time. In essence, these temporal dimensions encompass every possible past, present, and future that *could* exist, and does, "elsewhere" in the continuum.

In these higher temporal dimensions lie a potentially infinite number of timelines, running parallel to the familiar Federation Universe. The amount of divergence between universes—essentially the difference between their quantum signatures—determines how "far apart" they are in temporal terms. The Mirror Universe lies quite "close" to the Federation Universe in a dimensional sense, one of the reasons that Federation Universe personnel encountered it so early, and have returned to it so often.

Quantum Signatures

Everything in a particular timeline has a unique energy "signature" that can be measured on the quantum level, and cannot be changed by any means known to Federation science. This quantum signature is normally of little interest, since it is common to everything in the universe. However, objects from *outside* the universe have a different quantum signature. This includes people and objects from a parallel dimension. A quantum scan can determine whether or not something is from the same universe as the scanner. If the quantum signature of the subject's home dimension is known, then it can

also be identified. This requires a Physical Science test (TN 10), using the appropriate equipment (such as a tricorder). Success indicates the quantum signature of the subject, which can be matched against the signature of the current universe or other known universes.

Note that at present the quantum signature of the Mirror Universe is not widely known in the Federation and vice versa, so correctly identifying the universe of origin for either requires some time and a computer records search (a Computer Use (Research) test (TN 10) in the Federation; a more difficult test (TN 20) in the Mirror Universe with its more paranoid and manipulated records). This difficulty might be even higher in early eras of *Star Trek* (such as the original series timeline), in the days when the Federation has only vague notions of the Mirror Universe's existence (and vice versa).

Quantum Flux

Although the quantum signature of matter cannot be altered by any known means, it is possible to place matter in a state of quantum flux. This causes the affected matter to become "unstuck" in the space-time continuum, shifting "sideways" through time into another dimension. Transporters have the potential to place matter into a quantum flux state, and use a component known as a quantum resonance oscillator to keep the matter stream in the correct quantum state with relation to the rest of the universe, preventing it from going into quantum flux. A failure of the quantum resonance oscillator can lead to quantum flux, along with a number of other high-energy phenomena.

The Mirror Universe

The Mirror Universe is unusual, even for a parallel dimension. Most parallel dimensions known to Federation science are what might be termed *alternative histories*. They diverge from known Federation history at a particular place in space-time, known as the *divergence point*. From that moment on, they follow their own history, but before the divergence point, they are identical to the Federation Universe, save for a difference in quantum signature.

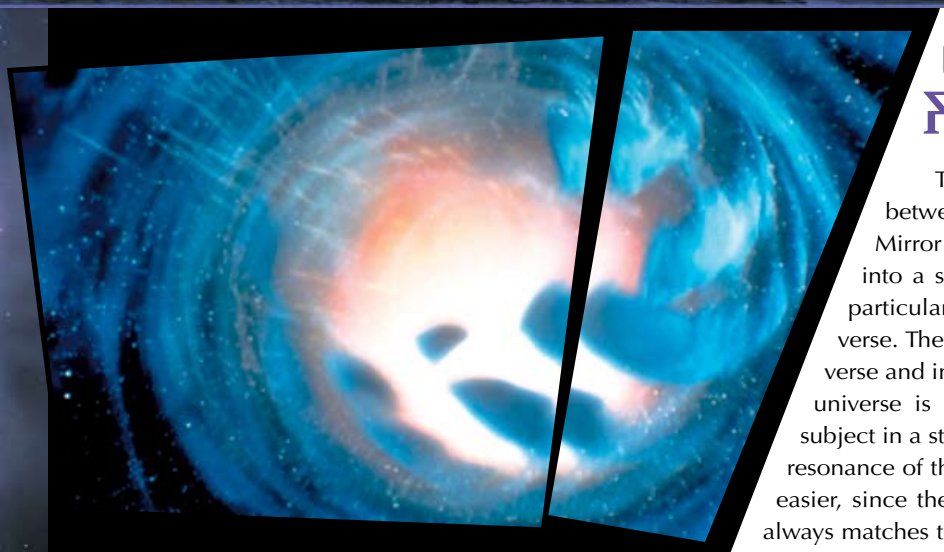
Some parallels appear to have diverged from Federation history so long ago that it is difficult to determine the divergence point. These parallels are quite different from the Federation Universe, up to and including vastly different life forms evolving on Earth, Vulcan, and other planets of the Galaxy. The further the divergence point is from the Federation present, the less likely it is for the parallel to have anything even remotely resembling Federation Universe history.

The Mirror Universe appears to be the exception. Although Mirror Universe history is quite different from Federation Universe history, going back centuries at the very least, many aspects of the Mirror Universe are remarkably similar to the Federation Universe, including the presence of certain individuals in both universes. For example, when Captain Kirk and his crew first encountered the Mirror Universe, they accidentally beamed on board an *Enterprise* that was an almost exact duplicate of their own, down to the presence of an acid stain Dr. McCoy recalled from his own sickbay. Although the Terran Empire differed radically from the Federation in terms of politics and culture, it still had many of the same people.

With a history that diverged even decades previously, much less centuries, the odds of the Mirror Universe having a duplicate *Enterprise*, with an almost identical crew, are astronomical. The odds of there being a Benjamin Sisko and a duplicate crew of Deep Space Nine nearly a century after Kirk verges on the impossible. The events described by Intendant Kira, including the fall of the Terran Empire at the hands of the Alliance, should have so scrambled the Human gene pool that Sisko and company should never have been born. And yet they exist in the Mirror Universe, along with duplicates of many other people from the Federation Universe. Why?

The exact answer is uncertain, but Federation scientists who have studied the phenomenon of the Mirror Universe have offered a theory. They suggest that the Mirror Universe represents some kind of "quantum inversion field," an almost literal reflection of the Federation Universe. The inversion field creates a universe that duplicates the Federation universe on a macroscopic scale, while altering events and personalities on a smaller scale. Take the example of looking at your reflection in a mirror. The image looking back at you appears nearly identical to you, but if you were to hold up a book or a sign, the writing in the mirror appears backward. So it is with the Mirror Universe. The large-scale things are nearly the same: planets, people, and even starships and space stations, but many of the details, the "writing" of the universe, are the opposite of what they are in the Federation Universe.

This "quantum inversion field" theory implies a strong relationship between the Mirror Universe and the Federation Universe, a kind of interdependency. Events in the Federation Universe may serve to dictate or at least influence events in the Mirror Universe. It may be that the Mirror Universe is only that, a reflection of the Federation Universe. If the Federation Universe was destroyed, the Mirror Universe might cease to exist as well. Of course, it is equally possible the Federation Universe is actually the reflection, and the Mirror Universe is the "real" one, or that they are both equally "unreal," reflections of some "higher" reality. Still, the strong relationship between the two realities on the quantum level seems to be what makes travel between them relatively easy compared to other quantum phenomena.

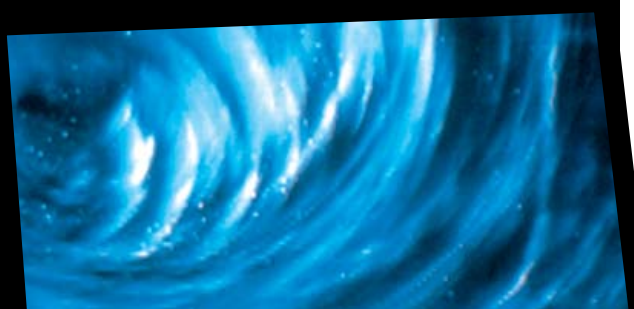


Quantum Mirroring

One result of this theory about the nature of the Mirror Universe is what scientists call "quantum mirroring." This essentially describes the fact that events and individuals often appear duplicated in both universes despite the larger-scale differences between them. For example, the lives of individuals from both universes are often extremely similar, even down to the smallest details, despite larger differences in personality and attitude.

Dr. McCoy's acid stain is a prime example. Although the Dr. McCoy from the Federation Universe was clearly a very different person from his Mirror Universe counterpart (who was described as "weak-willed" and prone to drinking excessively) both men experienced an identical accident that left an identical stain on their respective workbenches. Likewise, the Benjamin and Jennifer Sisko from the Federation Universe and their counterparts from the Mirror Universe were both married, although the Federation Jennifer died during the Borg assault on Wolf 359, while the Mirror Jennifer separated from her husband and continued her work as a scientist. The list of similarities goes on and on.

Quantum mirroring somehow "synchronizes" certain events between the two universes. Scientists are uncertain how this happens, or why certain events are mirrored almost exactly, while others are distorted or altered, and some events are not mirrored at all. They speculate that it may be possible to influence the events in the Mirror Universe through a greater understanding of the phenomenon, but to what degree remains unknown.



Quantum Flux Shifting

The only known means of travel between the Federation Universe and the Mirror Universe involves putting a subject into a state of quantum flux matched to the particular quantum resonance of the other universe. The affected matter shifts out of one universe and into the other. Returning to the original universe is a matter of once again placing the subject in a state of quantum flux and matching the resonance of the original universe. This is somewhat easier, since the subject's natural quantum signature always matches that of the subject's home universe.

This technique was first discovered accidentally by the crew of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* in 2267, when an ion storm over the planet Halka caused a failure of the quantum resonance oscillator in the ship's transporter system. When members of the bridge crew attempted to beam aboard, they entered a state of quantum flux and shifted into the Mirror Universe. At the exact same moment, the bridge crew of the *I.S.S. Enterprise* shifted into the Federation Universe. The two crews being on (essentially) the same mission, and beaming back to their vessels at the same moment, provides another example of the quantum mirroring between the two universes. *Enterprise* Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott was able to reverse the quantum flux process to return the crew to their home universe, while at the same time the crew of the Mirror *Enterprise* was returned to their universe.

Although some scientific investigation of the *Enterprise* mission took place, the Federation Council decided on a policy of non-intervention in the Mirror Universe. Although Captain Kirk's actions in the Mirror Universe could be interpreted as close to being a violation of the Prime Directive, the Council decided that the Directive did not specifically cover interference in the history of a parallel universe—especially since Kirk and his crew's actions primarily impacted the Mirror Empire, a post-warp culture. Captain Kirk's actions were overlooked, and Starfleet placed a moratorium upon further contact with the dangerous doppelgänger. Research into the nature of the Mirror Universe has been necessarily limited as a result.

Quantum Flux Transporter

The primary means of access between universes remains the quantum flux transporter. By modifying the quantum resonance oscillator of a standard transporter system, it is possible to place the matter stream in a state of quantum flux, shunting objects into a different universe during the re-materialization process. Targeting the transporter requires the quantum signature of the target universe; otherwise the subjects may become lost in the space-time continuum.

Making the necessary modifications to a transporter requires a Systems Engineering (Transporter) test (TN 20), with a System Operation (Transporter) test (TN 15) to operate it successfully. A failure on either test means the transporter does not function as a means of interdimensional travel, although no harm comes to the subjects of the transport. A disastrous failure on either test results in the transporter sending the subjects to a random parallel universe, then burning out (leaving no means for the travelers to return). Because of the potential danger to the travelers, and the possible complications of contact with other parallel universes, the Federation and Starfleet restrict dimensional travel to times when it is absolutely necessary.

Apparently, the Terran Empire (and later the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance) modified the quantum resonance oscillators of their transporters systems to make quantum flux transport impossible, most likely to keep people from fleeing their grasp by escaping into parallel timelines. The existence of the Federation Universe was kept secret from most people, out of concern that knowledge of parallel timelines might inspire hope and rebellion in subject populations. Still, residents of the Mirror Universe have modified transporters to function as quantum flux transporters, and have used them to visit the Federation Universe. Like many Imperial (and Alliance) regulations, those strong enough to break it, do. Some Mirror Universe factions also use the technology to keep an occasional eye on the "altruistic meddlers" of the Federation Universe, just to be sure that their enemies don't cross in from another timeline to interfere in Mirror Universe affairs (as happened on Deep Space 9).

Wormholes

Normally, wormholes provide a "shortcut" to a different point in space-time. Thus far, all the wormholes known to the Federation connect different points within the same timeline; that is to say, wormholes appear limited to the three dimensions of space and the linear dimension of time, rather than extending into the "sideways" temporal dimensions. It's theoretically possible, however, for a wormhole to connect two parallel timelines. Such a wormhole would most likely be short-lived, formed by high-energy interactions in the vicinity of strong subspace or forces of gravity (such as an active warp field or possibly a black hole). A ship could use an interdimensional wormhole as a means of traveling from one universe to another.

Experience has also shown that a resonant warp field applied to a normal wormhole can cause anything inside the warp field to enter a state of quantum flux, shifting it between universes. This occurred in 2370, when a Federation runabout carrying Major Kira Nerys and Dr. Julian Bashir suffered a warp malfunction inside the Bajoran wormhole, sending the ship and its crew into the Mirror Universe. By modulating the warp field exactly, it is theoretically possible for a ship entering a wormhole to travel to a parallel universe intentionally. Doing so would require a Propulsion Engineering (Warp Engines) test (TN 20) to successfully modify the ship's warp field. A failure on the test means the ship does not enter quantum flux, while a disastrous failure can catapult the ship into another timeline altogether rather than the desired destination.

Quantum Singularities

A quantum singularity is a point of incredibly intense gravity, so powerful that neither light nor normal matter can escape from its pull. The gravity emitted by a quantum singularity can stress local space-time in such a way as to cause spatial and temporal distortions. Chroniton particle emissions are common around quantum singularities, which may interact with subspace to cause unusual phenomena. The Romulans use a forced quantum singularity as a power source for their starships rather than a Federation-type antimatter engine.

An encounter with a quantum singularity in deep space, or the failure of an artificial singularity like those found aboard Romulan vessels, could accidentally induce a state of quantum flux. For example, a battle between a Federation and Romulan vessel could lead to the formation of a quantum fissure, or simple phase shift both vessels out of normal space-time into another universe. Returning in such a case would require the cooperation of both vessels and crews.

A vessel might be able to channel the energies of a quantum singularity, in conjunction with a warp field, to place matter in a state of quantum flux. The Klingons and Romulans experimented with a similar technique to shift a cloaked vessel out of phase with ordinary matter, not only making the vessel completely undetectable by conventional scanners, but also allowing it to pass through ordinary matter unharmed. All the experiments ended in disaster and were abandoned by both Empires. Two experimental phase cloak vessels vanished entirely, never to be seen again. It is possible they were phase shifted out of the universe entirely and into a parallel universe (although not the Mirror Universe, apparently).

Deliberately using a quantum singularity to phase shift a vessel into a parallel universe would be a difficult feat of Propulsion Engineering (Warp Engines) (TN 20) at best. Failure would most likely disable the vessel's drive at the very least. A disastrous failure could lead to anything from the disappearance or destruction of the ship to strange temporal phenomena to a visit to an undiscovered parallel universe (accompanied by a burnout of the main drive, making it very difficult to get back).

THE TANTALUS FIELD: SHATTERING THE MIRROR

One particular alien artifact deserves special attention: the Tantalus Field. Discovered by the Mirror Captain James Kirk in the looted laboratory of a dead alien scientist, the Tantalus Field granted the Captain much of his power and fearsome reputation.

The Field consists of a small viewscreen and a few simple controls. By adjusting the controls, the operator can call up a view of any point within orbital distance (up to 10,000 kilometers away). No known screens or other technology can block the Tantalus Field's view. This ability alone is quite useful for covert surveillance, but the Tantalus Field's true power allows its user to "lock on" to anything in the device's field of view and destroy it with the touch of a button.

The Tantalus Field operates on a principle of quantum interference. It disrupts the target's normal quantum resonance signature. In essence, the target no longer "belongs" in normal space-time and instantly ceases to exist, vanishing in a momentary flash of light. This is more than mere disintegration; the subject is banished from reality all together. There is no known defense against the Tantalus Field; once it has you in its sights, you are as good as dead. The field has no Damage Rating or game statistics for this reason. It requires only a System Operation (Tantalus Field) test (TN 10) to destroy anyone or anything within the field's range.

The Tantalus Field remained in the Mirror Kirk's possession until the Mirror Spock discovered its existence in 2267. With the aid of the Tantalus Field, Spock seized power on board the *I.S.S. Enterprise*. He used the Tantalus Field as one of his prime weapons in his own ascent to power in the Empire. Even the power of the Tantalus Field was no match for the invasion of the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance, though. The Field has not fallen into the hands of the Alliance, and its whereabouts remain unknown.

Quantum Fissures

A quantum fissure is a weak point in the space-time continuum where different parallel timelines come in contact. It can be thought of as a kind of "quantum keyhole" between different universes. Normally, quantum fissures are extremely small and short-lived, of little concern to anyone. However, certain high-energy subspace interactions, particularly warp fields, can cause quantum fissures to grow and de-stabilize, creating a more volatile interface between dimensions. Exposure to such a quantum fissure can place objects in a state of quantum flux, causing them to shift between different parallel universes.

In 2370, the *U.S.S. Enterprise-D* encountered an unstable quantum fissure, which caused hundreds of thousands of parallel universes to begin converging with the Federation Universe. The crew used a broad-spectrum warp field to safely seal the fissure and return the other timelines to their proper orientation in space-time. Sealing an unstable fissure in a similar manner requires a Propulsion Engineering (Warp Engines) test (TN 15).

A quantum fissure could theoretically be used as a means of travel between parallel universes, but a means of controlling the fissure and choosing a destination would be required. A very precise application of warp fields might accomplish this, but any error would lead to a destabilization of the fissure. Such a technique should be nearly impossible (difficulty 25+) for civilizations with Federation technology. Alien technology—like that of the Iconians—might employ artificial quantum fissures as a means of dimensional travel.

Alternative Modes of Transport

There are a number of other possibilities for travel between parallel universes. The options presented here are plot devices rather than technologies the Crew can rely on with any certainty. They are good for "accidental" dimension travel stories or when the Narrator wishes to introduce a unique form of dimensional travel into the series. Narrators should feel free to expand on the ideas presented here for use in their own games.

Warp Fields

Warp field and warp drive technology is an integral component to many of the modes of interdimensional travel above. Warp fields have the ability to alter the properties of local space-time and, as the Traveler has pointed out, the Federation's understanding of the relationship between warp fields and reality is in many ways only beginning. A static warp bubble once created an alternate reality, so it is quite possible an application of warp fields might provide a means to travel to parallel universe.

Warp fields mixed with exotic phenomena like quantum fissures, singularities, cosmic strings, and so forth create a recipe for sending a starship nearly anywhere (and anywhen) a Narrator wants, including into a parallel like the Mirror Universe. Getting back may involve duplicating the circumstances of the original accident—often involving a short-lived interstellar phenomenon, like an unstable wormhole or quantum fissure. Or the Crew may need to find another way to return home.

Time Travel

Time travel normally involves moving along the linear dimension of time, but it is possible some methods of time travel could—intentionally or accidentally—permit movement "sideways" through time into a parallel universe. Experiments involving time travel and the nature of time, such as Paul Manheim's experiment from "We'll Always Have Paris" (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*), could open a "window" into the Mirror Universe, or simply catapult the scientist and the Crew into the Mirror Universe altogether, with or without a means of getting back home.

Psionics

It may be possible to psionically induce quantum flux in an object, causing it to shift from one universe to another. Powerfully psionic races (ones developed far beyond the limits of Vulcans, Ocampa and other player races) could use a Quantum Shift psionic skill to push themselves or other beings into different quantum universes. The difficulty of a Quantum Shift Test is based on the parallel universe the character wishes to visit. Parallels "close" to the Federation Universe have a Moderate or better difficulty, while those "farther away" in a dimensional sense are more difficult to reach. The difficulty also varies based on the local field density and other phenomena, which may shift from time to time, allowing the Narrator to make using this ability more of less difficult as desired. A traveling alien could also wind up "stopping over" in a given universe to rest, taking small shifts one at a time instead of trying for a high-difficulty shift into a very distant universe.

Quantum shifting is best reserved for strange alien beings like the Traveler or the Q. A powerful quantum shifter could bring a Crew (or even a whole ship) along for the ride. This offers a good way of getting the Crew to a parallel universe without necessarily giving them the ability to get back (especially if Q isn't feeling particularly generous at that moment). Similarly, a quantum shifter might have other business in a different universe and only be around for a short time, thus necessitating that the Crew find a way to convince the alien to help.

Any creature that learns quantum shifting on a "normal" scale (a Human-like creature with the psionic abilities of some of the usual Alpha Quadrant Humanoid races) is unlikely to be able to shift more than a slight quantum distance, and such concentration would probably require hours of work—a character who somehow learns to quantum shift can't just rely on it to shift through spacetime and avoid locked doors, phaser fire and other plot-essential components.

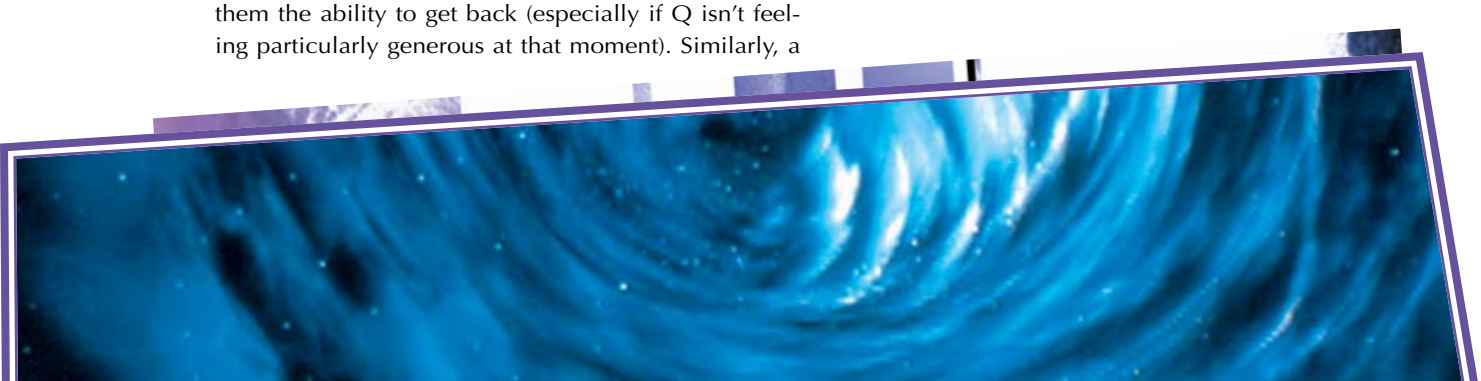
Artifacts

"Artifacts" cover any advanced, alien technology that provides the ability to travel between dimensions. The technology most likely comes from an alien race that is long extinct, like the Iconians, the Preservers, or the mysterious builders of the Guardian of Forever. It is technology so advanced that Federation species are like cavemen in comparison.

Most of these ancient races built their technology to last (the Guardian of Forever is *billions* of years old, for example). Generally, the instruction manuals haven't survived along with the device, so the Crew has to rely on trial-and-error in order to make it work. Most often, an alien artifact is activated accidentally and shifts the Crew (and possibly their ship) to another dimension before they can do anything to stop it. Getting back requires figuring out how to make the device work again, which isn't always the same as what made it work the first time.

With advanced dimensional travel technology, it is quite possible an ancient species or two visited the Mirror Universe (and other parallels) long ago. In fact, the Preservers or Iconians of the Mirror Universe may have been the same race from the Federation Universe, or perhaps the two parallel races were in contact with each other. Of course, it's equally possible the builders of the Guardian of Forever went to war with their Mirror counterparts, resulting in the destruction of both their civilizations.

Like psionic dimension travel, alien artifacts fall under the control of the Narrator, who can introduce them as plot devices to get the Crew to the Mirror Universe and (possibly) back.



SINISTER HISTORY

The Mirror Universe is not a divergent version of the standard, Federation Universe. You'll look in vain for the single, pivotal incident where its history forks off from the one we know. Instead, the Mirror and Federation universes stand in parallel to one another. Sometimes events in the two universes bear little relation to one another. In other eras, as in the 23rd and 24th centuries, events in the parallel worlds more closely track one another.

The defining difference between the two realities lies in the nature of the Human spirit: in the Mirror Universe, the enlightened values of the Federation don't hold sway—instead, the inhabitants of the Mirror Universe embrace conceit, deception, narcissism, and violence. Almost all of the other species of the Mirror Universe show similar moral malformations. Vulcans use logic to justify their personal agendas. Betazoids rely on their telepathy to ferret out embarrassing secrets. Klingons throw themselves into meaningless wars without any concept of honor. From time to time, a bit of self-interested motivation or true concern for others leads to a moment of compassion—but that's the exception, rather than the rule. In the Mirror Universe, history belongs to the ambitious, the cunning, and the brutal. If your characters are sufficiently bold and cruel, they can seize history and remake it as they wish, just like the greats. Are they ready to join the ranks of Zefram "Slavekiller" Cochrane, Kodos the Wise, and James "General Order 24" Kirk? If so, they should brush up on their knowledge of the past, for as a philosopher of early 20th century Earth once said, "Those who remember the past can condemn their enemies to repeat it."

EARTH SINISTER

No planet's saga is more relevant to the history of the 23rd century than that of Earth, spawning ground of the Terran Empire. Mirror Universe characters, unencumbered by any weak-kneed rules protecting the integrity of the time stream, may find reason to travel to the past in search of information, plunder, or perfect prisons for adversaries too useful to kill outright. This is the past they'll find.

BEFORE THE SPACE AGE

Earth embraced savagery and brutality long before the 20th century advent of space travel. By that time, its war-like inhabitants had honed their talent for violence, exploitation, and deceit over four millennia of recorded history.

The savagery began during prehistoric times. Archaeological evidence shows that early Cro-Magnon man systematically hunted down and killed their Neanderthal competition. Mass graves strewn with shattered Neanderthal bones attest to mankind's primal urge to genocide. Schoolteachers proudly lecture young students on this long-ago slaughter; the story embodies all of the species' most valued traits. The Cro-Magnons showed cleverness and teamwork in defeating physically superior foes. They displayed greater hunger for survival and dominance than the stupidly peaceful Neanderthals. ("Neanderthal" is still used as a term of abuse for pacifists, intellectuals, and other socially backward types.)

Ruthlessly Primitive Conquerors

Historical Mirror Terra faced many of the same challenges as its twin on its climb to civilization—but ultimately came under the sway of cunning and tyrannical Emperors, not a benevolent world government. Egypt's King Menes created the first great nation as he institutionalized his theocratic cult under the rule of a twisted image of Anubis. By engaging the populace in his own depravities he insured his continued popularity; the peoples' wholehearted support of his maltheism contributed to his own reign. The stratified Egyptians—priest-kings on top, slave laborers on the bottom—survived until the arrival of the bronze-age Greeks under Agamemnon. With logical philosophers and analytical weaponsmiths, the Greeks brought intelligent tactics and warfare to bear against the more mystically-oriented Egyptians. Their successful campaign ended in the destruction of the pyramids and the devastation of the Egyptian culture. Over time, the Greeks, lacking a powerful outside enemy, became complacent, and the Persians eventually challenged their rule of the Mediterranean. Both fell before Alexander the Great, whose lust for conquest, aided by his voracious appetite for literary examination (and the literati themselves), combined to make him not only a ruthless warrior but a canny, educated one. Alexander outmaneuvered the Persians and forged a Macedonian empire. Unfortunately for him, his vision could not outlive his demise, and after his death his empire was swallowed by the emerging Rome.

In the Mirror Universe, the Roman Empire broke the cycle of conquest, maintenance, and decadence that had characterized its predecessors. Roman leaders kept the Empire strong by actively recruiting the most promising warriors and kings of the so-called barbarian tribes of Gaul and Germany to stand at their sides. These chieftains became Romanized and thus joined in the backstabbing and intrigue of the capital. They rose to power not by conquering the Empire but by rising within its ranks. The Roman Empire turned potential enemies into allies, except where they could not be suborned—where it paid its recruited outsiders handsomely to function as shock troops, as in the case of its quick and decisive war to quash the weak faiths of Christianity and its parent, Judaism.

The Roman Empire, of course, eventually gave way to the establishment of a Germanic Empire. The continued spread of a domineering ethos and the drive to conquer finally removed the last vestiges of nationalism from Europe; people referred simply to the Empire, without attachment to the despot of the generation. One ruler might fall, but the status quo had become so entrenched that it was accepted as eternal.

Reflecting the expansion of the Renaissance and colonial eras in the Federation Universe, the Mirror Universe's nascent Empire stumbled across the Americas in an attempt to find new sea routes to conquer the East. The emerging frontier became home to disaffected rebels and malcontents who chafed against the Imperial seat of power, arguing that the Empire always weakened because its titular head became so entrenched in power that he became unchallengeable. Instead, these revolutionaries proposed that all people should have a hand in the government—both to make the rulers strive to curry the favor of the masses, and to allow power blocs to shift the government in coups that didn't always involve the total devastation of the land. In their system, Senators would vie for the favor of their followers, and thus would have support from allied groups instead of having to wrest their resources from a ravaged populace. The people would be defrauded into thinking that they had a hand in their own governance, and would willingly offer up their freedoms and their possessions to the "elected government."

Coup followed coup among the Senators, but by now much of the globe rested under the smothering hand of the Empire. Constant minor conflagrations entertained the populace and kept up the appearance of "security threats," while Senators bickered and assassinated one another, played by the very game their predecessors had created. Each Emperor sponsored his own brand of "pet projects"—from the genocidal manias of Pol Pot and Adolf Hitler to the dreams of space conquest espoused by Jimmy Carter and his advisor, James Keeler. Eventually, though, the Empire fell under the grasp of one individual who recognized that in the technological world, rulership rested not in the hands of the greatest warrior or politician, but the individual who controlled the very technologies that *all* Humans required in order to survive. Henry Starling, an otherwise humble software engineer and computer scientist, cemented a grip on the world by producing the computer languages and programs that every citizen of the Empire used—and then threatening to bring the entire system down. Even the secret genetically-engineered super-soldiers and bionically enhanced Senators couldn't compete with the man who had the tools to shut down all of the very computers that ran power, weapons, water and government.

Unfortunately for Earth, when Henry Starling met his demise, his computer programs did just that. The Terran Empire fell into a new Dark Age.

Dark Ages and New Conquests

The demise of the technical apparatus of the 20th and 21st century Terran Empire returned the planet to a state of barbaric feudality, at least for a time. While the Federation Universe struggled through the aftermath of its own petty wars and economic crises, the Mirror Empire's Earth territories broke apart into feuding states where once again might made right.

The renewed dark age lasted for two generations, as barbaric conquerors slowly re-seated their holds on the territories of the Mirror Earth. Petty tyrants ruled

SECRETS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Time travel played a secret but determining role in Mirror Earth's 20th century development. James T. Kirk, piratical captain of the *I.S.S. Enterprise,* fathered James T. Keeler during an incident in which he was accidentally thrust back into the 1930s. He saved Edith Keeler from her destined death in an automobile accident and then told her the century's future history, so that he and she could rule together. Although Kirk's crew thwarted his plans for world domination by rescuing him from his temporal marooning, Keeler used the information he'd given her to seek out the great men of history and bend them to her will.

Although Khan Noonien Singh's treachery helped speed the demise of Keeler's competing power bloc, the eventual Emperor of the era—Henry Starling—acquired his influence from his own knowledge of the future. These secrets were supplied to him by a Captain Braxton of the 30th century timeship *Aeon.* Starling killed Braxton after turning his own 30th century brain-scanning technology against him. He used the information he ripped out of Braxton's cortex to stay one step ahead of competitors, and to steer world events back toward the future that would have been if not for Kirk's intervention. In doing so, he unknowingly also moved the course of history briefly into closer parallel with the Federation Universe.

over the remnants of the dormant cities until finally the few remaining scientists and computer criminals managed to restore some of the power and computer systems of a few major settlements. From these ashes came the rapid consolidation of primitive territories under the newly technologically-enthroned leaders.

By the close of the 21st century, two leaders emerged as the predominant world powers—Colonel Green, a cunning and charismatic man with a penchant for genocide, and Lee Kuan, a barbaric tribalist who fused his empire's reborn technologies with the hardened lifestyle of nomadic tribesmen. The two sparred warily, engaging their respective territories, for the better part of a decade, before enlightened self-interest finally resulted in a détente. Unwilling to risk their conquests on an uncertain battle, both commanders decided that a final cataclysmic clash would be too risky—and so the two met in secret to carve up the remainder of the world and rebirth the Terran Empire.

First Contact, First Conquest

As Green and Kuan set about taming the remainder of Terra, they stumbled across an unexpected bonus. Hidden in a base off the coast of Hawaii, a maverick inventor named Zefram Cochrane gambled his future on the development of the new warp drive. With his revolutionary engine, Zefram Cochrane planned to colonize the Solar system, and then return to master Earth. Green and Kuan discovered him before he could finish his experiments, though, and his only recourse was to offer up his research in return for his life. Cochrane's ship, the *Phoenix*, broke the light speed barrier with the backing of the Terran Empire.

As it did in the Federation Universe, Cochrane's experiment attracted the attention of a Vulcan survey ship—the *Ravok*. This ship, though, was not a peaceful scientific survey vessel, but a spy ship designed to scout out places where the Vulcans might emotionlessly harness and exploit natural resources to their own benefit. After surreptitiously following the *Phoenix*, the Vulcans found themselves captured and tortured by their Human neighbors. Eventually the Vulcans were executed, but not before the Humans had learned of the location of the Vulcan homeworld and stolen quite a bit of their technology.

The new Empire's unified attempt to build an invasion of Vulcan ultimately failed: The Vulcans arrived *en masse* with a proposal. Terra would be too difficult to conquer easily, the Vulcans opined, and could not itself fight the technologically superior Vulcans without both sides sustaining atrocious losses. Instead, the two races joined together to exploit nearby pre-warp cultures and the natives of Alpha Centauri.

Conquest, Conquest, Conquest

While Alpha Centauri proved a veritable jewel of conquest, other planets still loomed nearby, waiting to be plucked. The Empire's

improved war machine raged on, tackling the crafty Tellarites and then subjugating the stubborn, berserk Andorians. In both cases, the war effort cost the Empire dearly—Tellarite engineering savvy and Andorian bloodthirst both cost many lives. In the end, though, the Empire won out; in the tradition of the ancient Roman Empire, the Terran Empire offered the defeated states "client status," a privilege of continued existence in exchange for placing their special skills at the feet of the Empire. Tellarite engineering ingenuity, backed by the threat of extinction of their homeworld if anything should fail, caused the Empire's technology to rocket ahead, while the Andorians displaced their fury by becoming shock troops in the Empire's ground wars and occupations.

Recent Developments

Throughout the burgeoning 23rd century, the Empire experienced rapid growth. Its colony worlds provided raw materials to support the bourgeois and the warships of Starfleet. Dissidents and weaklings found themselves forcibly deported to harsh planets, there to eke out a living that would benefit the Empire in raw materiel—or in the death of another whiny, useless mouth. Everywhere it turned, the Empire found another sentient race, ready for enforced servitude. The recalcitrant Bolians, psychopathic Betazoids and biologically exploitative Trill were no match for the combined power of the Empire's subject worlds, and all fell in the fashion of the earliest Imperial conquests. Even the Axanari, a paranoid and secretive race with a will to power almost equal to the Terrans', finally fell after Imperial turncoat Garth of Izar took over the Axanari resistance and used them as his own tool in the ascent to Senatorial power.

After managing to subjugate a half-dozen races, the Empire finally met enemies that it couldn't completely subjugate. The enigmatic Romulans demanded that the Empire leave Romulan space as sovereign territory. In response, the Empire fought the Romulans to a standstill. While Romulan spies and subterfuge provided an early advantage, Starfleet's overall technological prowess and numbers forced the hand of the Romulans. Threatened with annihilation, the Romulans offered a truce—they would remain behind a wall of their own space, patrolled by Starfleet, but they would sooner destroy their own world than become subjects of the Empire. The Empire had no desire to continue dragging out a resource-costly war; the Romulans could always be subjugated later when secret technological advancements made the cloaking device ineffective (or, better still, put it into the Empire's hands). In turn, the Romulans had no desire to risk total cultural contamination through an extended conflict.

In similar fashion, the Empire encountered the brutal Klingons and engaged in immediate hostilities. The Klingons, far less developed technologically, suffered several losses until Starfleet finally made its way

THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

This chapter presents only the outline of history in the Mirror Universe, enough to give the Narrator a feel for its direction. Remember, events in the Mirror Universe are often a disturbing reflection of our own history; any history book can provide the core inspiration for the timeline of the Mirror Universe when suitably twisted. Narrators should remember that the fact that Mirror Universe history isn't completely known to the Crew is a good source of dramatic tension. Crewmembers from either universe masquerading in the other may find their knowledge of historical "facts" slightly skewed, which can blow the lid off their deceptions. Similarly, a transposed crewman trying to take advantage of some "fact" may be in for a surprise—the Mirror Universe Captain Kirk certainly couldn't exercise power in the Federation Universe because, among other things, his Federation Universe counterpart had no Tantalus Field. In similar fashion, the Narrator should fill in these details as the plot requires. There's not a hard-and-fast Mirror Universe history, but any Narrator who needs one should have sufficient inspiration to "fill in the gaps" with the help of this chapter.

Remember, too, that even if some inconsistencies pop up, they're easily explainable. The Mirror Universe is a place of paranoia and secrecy—perhaps something that the Crew believed was fact turns out to be a fabrication. Also, since the Mirror Universe has millions of near-similar reflections, it's always possible for a Crew member to find out that he's not in the Mirror Universe that he expected. Perhaps in one of the dark Mirrors, the Terran Empire never fell and the character encounters himself as a horrific Starfleet despot—or maybe the Crew finds an Alpha Quadrant overrun by the Mirror Universe's Borg!

to Qo'noS, the Klingon homeworld. There the vessels of Starfleet carried out General Order 24, the order to destroy all life on the world. The Klingons were scattered to the corners of the Alpha and Beta Quadrants, but their stubborn and honor-driven lifestyle would never permit them to submit. In perhaps one of its greatest mistakes, the Empire had martyred an entire world, and the Klingons would not be satisfied with anything less than the total defeat of the Empire.

Finally, the Cardassians seemed at first to be much like the Klingons—stubborn, proud, and aggressive, but technically less advanced than the Empire. Imperial operatives crushed the Cardassian fleet in a series of quick and decisive encounters; superior sensor technologies allowed Starfleet to ambush the Cardassians and destroy them with impunity. Again, the Empire moved into Cardassian territory and demanded tribute; the Cardassians stubbornly refused. Unwilling to let a minor race rest—and needing an example to help stop unrest in the face of continued Klingon sabotage—the Empire struck decisively and forced the Cardassians against the wall. Cardassian colony worlds were sterilized and their homeworld threatened. Unfortunately for the Empire, the principle "the enemy of my enemy is my ally" came into play as Klingon saboteurs, combined with their limited space fleet, came to the aid of the Cardassians, on the condition that the Cardassians open their surviving worlds and shipbuilding facilities to Klingon use. The jump-start of Klingon technology combined with Cardassian resource ingenuity allowed enough of a fleet build-up to grind the Imperial offensive to a slow stalemate; eventually, the Empire decided to regroup and consider the destruction of Cardassian colony worlds an effective victory. (The fact that the Imperial economy was taking a downward turn also contributed to the withdrawal, as it became harder to replace damaged or destroyed ships.)

Enemies New and Old

With the other Alpha and Beta quadrant races decisively defeated, the Terran Empire turned toward internal policing. The threat of constant terrorism by subject

races occupied a great deal of time and resources, while the lack of outside enemies allowed the Empire to grow decadent, like its predecessors. By 2269, the Empire was already at the beginnings of its downward spiral—a descent pushed by Captain Spock, who took command of the *I.S.S. Enterprise* and from there used the Tantalus Field to cement his own controls in place. In an attempt to bring stability to the Empire, Spock offered many subject races a chance at self-governance and disbanded large amounts of Starfleet's military projects as unnecessary. Unfortunately, the Mirror Universe has no mercy for the weak, and these actions would leave the Terran Empire defenseless in the face of an outside threat.

As a combined force, the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance managed to pull off some stunning coups—including poisoning or destroying outright large portions of the Empire's tribute supplies, thereby tightening the noose around Terra and the core worlds. Starving subjects vent their frustrations on the rulers, but with Starfleet already lessening its forces and corrupt ministers grabbing for what personal power they could capture, the Empire lacked the united front to face a stealthy enemy. While a massed fleet would certainly have galvanized the Empire to action, nobody took the Alliance seriously until it was too late.

Galaxy Sinister

Some of you may object to this chapter's unrelenting focus on the history of Earth, which suggests to us that you need to be severely beaten and possibly thrown down a turbolift shaft. Everyone knows that only Earth's history matters! Anyone who thinks otherwise is a fool and a weakling. However, those who wish to know what happened on Vulcan, Andoria, and other insignificant planets before the Terran Empire annexed them should consult chapter 15, *Worlds of the Empire,* beginning on page 140.

MIRROR UNIVERSE

23RD CENTURY THE EMPIRE

LIVING BY THE SWORD: LIFE IN THE TERRAN EMPIRE

Life in the twenty-third century Empire is harsh—if you're a pitiful weakling. On the other hand, if you're something other than a pathetic little excuse for a sentient being, the Empire offers you everything you could ever wish for. Power, if you are strong enough to seize it. Money, if you are smart enough to steal it. Sex, if you are alluring enough to demand it. What else is there to want?

GOVERNMENT

Imperial citizens don't really think of "the government" in the abstract. The institutions of the Imperium and the Senate aren't big, impersonal structures out to squash the hopes and dreams of the average man. Everybody knows that they're only masks for the personal agendas of powerful leaders who've struggled their way up the ranks one backstab at a time. No one grouses about the government when local tax collectors come to ransack their homes on suspicion of nonpayment. Instead, you complain about that bastard Nilz Baris over in the district revenue office, who you turned down when he came to ask permission to marry your beautiful young ward. Well, actually, you don't *complain* exactly; you vow revenge. You tap your own best connections to find some way of screwing Baris over. Maybe you know someone who knows someone who can blackmail him. Perhaps one of his superiors owes you a favor. Perhaps your misfit son who spends all his time down in the basement can build you a bomb to stick under the hood of his ground-transport vehicle. Whatever. The point is—the government doesn't do you dirty. Individuals do you dirty. Some of them boast power bases in government, that's all. The government is just a collection of people, all of whom are doing their best to get what they want any way they can, just like you are. Anybody who expects the government to treat people fairly and consistently is clearly an alien from some distant dimension or something. It's no different from the piratical private sector. In fact, the lines that separate the government and private commerce are so blurry they might as well be non-existent.

Still, for the would-be climber of the turbo-lifts of power, a few pointers on the structure of government institutions might prove instructive. Two branches compose the Government: the Imperium and the Senate. Again, the separation between the two branches is more theoretical than actual. Smooth operators move between the two institutions all the time. Most new Emperors are Senators with fresh blood on their hands. As always, keep in mind that there are two sets of laws in the Empire: the written ones, and the real ones. Anyone who expects the first set of rules to warrant more than a nod when the chips are down deserves what he gets.

The Imperium

The executive branch of the Empire is headed, obviously, by the Emperor. New Emperors are appointed by an elected body, the Imperial Senate. Because Emperors nearly always rise to office after killing their predecessors, a naïve observer might conclude that all one must do to become head of state is to bump off the man whose posterior currently warms the seat-cushions of the throne. The Imperial Senate, however, must confirm the power of any would-be Emperor. An Emperor without Senatorial backing won't last more than a few minutes.

Typically, an Imperial pretender must have a strong entourage to back up his claims. This means either coercing or bribing Senators into line, and having the network of agents, killers and bureaucrats ready to sweep into place and seize the reins of power. Any former Emperor may have loyalists waiting in the wings; it's dangerous to let old loyalties cloud the succession. Of course, one must be cautious of the possibility of treachery—any agent could turn double. Thus, an Imperial hopeful must be quick (to make sure he moves before he's exposed), ruthless (to deal with potential informants), cunning (to out-maneuver Senators and the Emperor in an entrenched powerbase) and strong (to command the loyalty of a large enough force to take over the reins of Empire).

Imperial Power

The Emperor rules by fiat. Due to the support of the Senate and influence over the Imperial bureaucracy, the Emperor simply issues edicts to various ministers and thereby changes the course of the Empire. Any lone individual who defies such an edict places himself at the tender mercies of every other would-be governor who hopes to curry favor and position.

Typically, the Emperor oversees and directs the Ministry of War (responsible for Starfleet as well as the prosecution of external threats and the acquisition of resources), the Security Ministry (which covers internal affairs and "justice"), the Science Ministry (in charge of co-opting valuable research and cracking down on dangerous projects or companies), the Propaganda Ministry (connected to the mass media and responsible for indoctrinating citizens), the Ministry of Genetic Purity (overseeing defense against invasive parasites, alien shapechangers and genetically-resequenced criminals), the Revenue Ministry (in charge of the thugs who collect taxes and oversee the disbursement of favors, graft and grants) and the Ministry of Vassal Affairs (the office that coordinates issuing demands to subject world governments). The Bureau of Interstellar Hegemony also answers to the Emperor. It is the closest thing to a representative arm for the various worlds of the Empire, as it oversees local governments and their funding, whether colonial or conquered. The BIH sometimes opposes the Emperor's directions because of a different viewpoint on how to proceed in local affairs (and usually has several executions in quick succession as a result).

Emperor John Gill

The white-haired, patrician professor John Gill ascended to the throne after a Senatorial coup polished off Garth of Izar. (The Senators showed their respect for Garth, who'd lived like a Caesar, by killing him like a Caesar. About a dozen of them joined in stabbing him to death on the Senate floor. He died with a grim smirk on his face.)

The Senators had been worried that the trigger-happy ex-starship captain would be too quick to engage the new Klingon-Cardassian Alliance. They chose Gill as their compromise candidate, figuring that an academic would be both cautious and pliable. Evidently, they forgot his bloodcurdling tenure as head of the Bureau of Interstellar Hegemony. As overseer of the subject states, he implemented an array of draconian measures meant to make the maintenance of order easier. Employing a theory he called Managed Culture, Gill imposed, with varying degrees of success, new laws and customs on the subject states. His office dictated everything from the clothes subjects wore to the songs they were allowed to sing. The bureau abandoned Managed Culture shortly after Gill's resignation in 2260, but now he wants to reinstate his pet project. He's also made noises about imposing aspects of his program on regular citizens of the Empire. The Senators, however, don't like totalitarian thinking; they believe in unconstrained individual rights. Unfortunately, Gill has consolidated his position surprisingly quickly, stacking the Imperial Cabinet with staunch loyalists. The struggle to upend Gill will be a difficult one.

The stiff and formal Gill is a private man who lets few know his secrets. The dearth of information on this powerful man breeds many a rumor. Some of the juiciest speculations about Gill are as follows:

- He's a secret drug addict.
- He's actually very ill; his right-hand man, Melakon, is the true power behind the throne.
- Gill, who thinks three moves ahead of everyone else, has planted false rumors of his infirmity to smoke out would-be coup plotters.
- Gill is having an affair with T'Pau of Vulcan. (This rumor attaches itself to every Emperor.)

Gill's Cabinet

Gill's most trusted aide is Security Minister Melakon. A tall, virile man attended by a harem of beauties, Melakon hails from the subject world of Ekos. His planet served as the proving ground for Gill's Managed Culture theories. The imitative Ekosians took to his highly-structured artificial society with zeal. The fiery Melakon showed more fervor than most. Gill took the man as his protégé. Melakon served as Security Chief on various other planets where Gill later struggled to repeat his successes on Ekos. Though he proclaims his absolute loyalty to Gill at the slightest opportunity, some seasoned throne-watchers suspect that he protests too much, and that Melakon wants the throne himself. He'd have to buck some well-established protocols to do it. Only one Emperor, Garth of Izar, has hailed from anywhere but Earth. Melakon fully intends to become alien Emperor number two.

War Minister Matthew Decker rose up through Starfleet ranks to his current top military post. His men admire him for the insane glint that appears in his eyes as he contemplates the destruction of his enemies. The lone holdover in cabinet from the Garth regime, Decker has learned to moderate his views on the wisdom of a strike against the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance. He no longer calls for an immediate wing-and-a-prayer assault. Instead, he demands the greatest military buildup in the history of mankind, so that the space-Huns and spoonheads might be wiped out to the last man. Unusually for a War Minister, he maintains a ship, which he occasionally takes out on missions for old times' sake. That vessel is the *I.S.S. Doomsday Machine*, a retooled version of an alien, unmanned spacegoing weapon that Decker (and Spock) prevented from destroying the Rigel colonies. He looks forward to smashing a few planets with it when the inevitable war with the Alliance commences.

Science Minister Dr. Sevrin bears a peculiar resemblance to Melakon, despite his Tiburonese features. A charismatic man who believes in technological solutions to all problems, Sevrin enjoys good relations with the Senate. He believes that colonists should exploit planetary resources to the fullest, moving on to new worlds when old ones are completely mined out.

Dr. Tristan Adams, an even more fervent believer in Managed Culture than Gill himself, promotes the doctrine in his role as Propaganda Minister. A psychiatrist and criminologist, Adams until recently served as head of the Tantalus Penal Colony, where foes of the Emperor often stay as special wards of the state.

Gill appointed the young Starfleet officer Raymond Stiles to head the Genetic Purity Ministry, no doubt as repayment of favors extended to him over the years by the influential Stiles family. Some of Stiles' ancestors were among the few Human casualties of the First Romulan War. Consequently, he tends to see Romulans lurking around every corner, convinced that intelligence operatives of this defeated species are somehow responsible for every setback suffered by the Gill regime.

Although plucked from utter obscurity by Emperor Gill to serve as Revenue Minister, the rotund and ebullient Harry Mudd rapidly charmed his way into the hearts of Senators. The road to their affection was no doubt covered in a thick carpeting of graft. He dispenses favors like a man born to the job. More interested in money than politics, he's considered the most likely current cabinet minister to survive a post-Gill purge.

Lawyer Samuel T. Cogley serves as Minister of Vassal Affairs. His short stature and mousy features belie a razor-sharp legal mind. He uses his skill at creative treaty interpretation to dance rings around all but the most influential of vassal rulers. A petty and vindictive man with a long memory for slights, Cogley spends most of his free time vigorously pursuing personal grudges.

The Senate

A legislative body called the Senate counterbalances the power of the Emperor. Most Emperors hail from the Senate; years of walking the corridors of power gives the opportunity to form the right allegiances for an eventual ascension to the throne. Eligible voters (that is, subject citizens with some modicum of wealth and influence) decide on their Senators. Each world has a seat on the Senate, although important core worlds like Vulcan and Terra have a disproportionate number of Senators (Terra alone can easily outvote the rest of the Empire).

As one might expect of the Empire's regressive politics, incumbent Senators almost always retain their positions. Term limits and election regulations are unheard of—the only way to unseat an incumbent Senator is to kill him and have a scheme in place to replace him, or to arrange a scandal so hideous that the Senator simply can't overcome the publicity (exploiting weaknesses or "reform sympathies" works best; everyone knows that only the most ruthless Senator in office can effectively push the agenda of his prefecture, or voting area).

Senators take and hold office not only through personal power, but also through manipulation and subterfuge. While Starfleet captains might rely on their raw knife-fighting skills to keep order, Senators must placate entire worlds. Thus, a Senator must be captivating on video, bold in action and ready to promise anything to the constituency. Voters must be promised wealth and conquest with minimal risk—and while many people are sheep, the Senator must be convincing enough to deflect the criticism of his opponents.

Senators also exercise wide-ranging networks. A Senator achieves office based on supporters; these supporters receive promises, favor and graft. Of course, a Senator who reneges on these promises once in office will quickly lose allies due to his treachery, so the Senator must be careful to build a network that has the strength to push him into office without turning him into a puppet.

The most prominent benefit to a Senatorial position, of course, is the filthy lucre. Senators oversee a wide range of legislation, including Imperial disbursements. Therefore, Senators have a great opportunity to line their own pockets, as well as those of their allies. This in turn gives Senators greater ability to build allied networks. The crafting of legislation is almost incidental by comparison—"law" is only heeded as far as it's bought and enforced, so a Senator's reach is as long as his pocketbook, not his legal pen.

IMPERIAL TREASURY

Unlike the Federation, the Empire still keeps a rigid trade standard. A person's wealth measures individual value, speaks of competence and networking ability, and allows the privelege of creature comforts. Basic necessities aren't a right in the Empire, and those who don't have the strength to take what they need, will die.

The basic currency of the Empire is the credit, indicated by "Cr". The credit is a virtual currency, traded electronically from one account to another. The Revenue Ministry backs the credit with its vast reserves of ludugial gold. Ludugial gold is the Mirror Universe's equivalent of latinum: a precious metal impossible to duplicate. Well, *supposedly* uncounterfeitable.

Officers in undercover operations against enemy powers may need to use their currency. The Cardassian and Romulan governments forbid exchange of their currencies into Imperial credits. Klingons discourage trade with Imperial citizens. However, all three powers allow conversion into another ludugial gold-backed currency, the Orion *dejebbit*. Moneychangers use the *dejebbit* to turn credits into Cardassian *leks*, Klingon *darseks*, or Romulan *t'chaks*. Currency values fluctuate all the time. The price of ludugial gold isn't constant, either. Still, the chart below should give you a rough idea of currency equivalency. Each value is measured in relation to one slip of ludugial gold—which the Empire considers equivalent to a single credit.

CORPORATIONS

Since the Empire still engages in monetary trade, corporations exert a powerful hold over individuals. Given many privileges because of the donations they make to Senators, the corporations have a near-stranglehold on technology, trade and resource exploitation. Only the Emperor's armed might and the Ministry of Science keep the corporations from capturing rule over the populace of Terra through the fact that they supply the very goods necessary to continued survival.

Most of the major corporations of the Empire are privately held. What's the fun of being a robber baron if you have to answer to a pack of whining stockholders every four quarters? The Orions run a strange institution called a stock market, on which a few Terran-owned companies are listed, but don't look for really important companies there. The real titans of commerce all belong to a handful of owners. Many are family firms, ownership having been passed down from father to son throughout the generations. Others operate as partnerships between wealthy individuals.

Luckily for the ambitious, most existing corporations of any size are run not by the family members or partners who own them—they're too wealthy to sully their hands with daily operations—but by professional managers called Chief Executive Officers, or CEOs for short. New hires without extensive inside contact start out as a lowly employee performing mindless make-work projects. Advancement usually comes by keeping a look out for an incompetent colleague who happens to occupy a better job position. A combination of professional zeal and extensive documentation of the co-worker's inadequacies paves the way for advancement when the co-worker meets with a sad (arranged) misfortune. Once the co-worker's out of the picture, show the evidence of superior talent (and the former co-worker's ineptitude) to the current supervisor, with a little bit of money slipped in. To become CEO, simply repeat this process a dozen or so times until reaching the top of the corporate ladder.

MIRROR UNIVERSE CURRENCY

Culture	Basic Unit of Currency	Value
Cardassian	Lek	Cr0.03
Terran	Credit	Cr1
Ferengi	Komax	Cr10
Gorn	Tokbar	Cr4
Klingon	Darsek	Cr0.4
Nausicaan	Chiv'vig	Cr0.18
Orion	Dejebbit	Cr0.1
Romulan	T'chak	Cr0.05

POWER, PRESTIGE, AND POSSESSIONS

While money, sex, and power are the key values of the Mirror Universe's inhabitants, these are just raw *things*—and sometimes, it's important to be able to demonstrate your money, sex, and power through your own unique idiom. In a replicator-driven society, where you don't have to fight for food or basic survival necessities, how do you show yourself to be head-and-shoulders above your fellow primate (besides killing him)? Simple—you own irreproducible, collectable originals. Owning a unique, original Andy Warhol or Van Gogh painting, for instance, carries prestige because you have the only one, while everyone else wants it. The fact that you can *keep* it means that you must have some measure of wealth and power—which is, not coincidentally, also sexy. If you have the only Tantalus field generator, then not only do you have a unique item, you have a unique item of power, and that's even better. Now the only trick is holding on to it…

SAMPLE PRICES

The following chart gives you an idea of what ludugial gold will buy these days.

Item or Service	Cost in Credits
Dagger	Cr15
Tricorder, standard	Cr25
Phaser	Cr50
Phaser rifle	Cr150
A sumptuous non-replicated meal	Cr300
Tricorder, medical	Cr300
Environmental suit	Cr500
Impressive clothing	Cr1,000
Selection of exotic poisons	Cr1,200
Selection of antidotes to exotic poisons	Cr12,000
Services of Orion slave girl, one evening	Cr500
Orion slave girl, one-year lease	Cr125,000
Orion slave girl, outright purchase	Cr500,000
Slave laborer	Cr25
Enslaved white-collar worker	Cr100,000
State-of-the-art torture chamber	Cr25,000
Death trap (Ekosian crocodiles included)	Cr50,000
Commission as an Ensign in Starfleet	Cr200,000
Assassination contract on life of prominent or well-protected citizen	Cr1 million
Palatial estate	Cr10 million
Runabout (Capacity 6 persons)	Cr250 million
Scout ship	Cr455 million
Interstellar freighter	Cr600 million
Series fund for Senatorial re-election bid	Cr3 billion
Inquisition-class starship	Cr4 billion
Starbase, decommissioned	Cr13 billion
Starbase, fully equipped	Cr40 billion

For those without the resources or desire to leverage a small corporation into prominence, a number of corporations offer lucrative benefits to their loyal employees.

Chronowerx Corporation

Despite its role in creating Terra's second Dark Age due to its mismanaged computer systems, Henry Starling's Chronowerx Corporation managed to restructure and now has its claws wedged as deeply as ever into the heart of the Imperial economy. Its operating system long ago passed into the public domain and still serves as the basis for all computing in the Empire. Nonetheless, Chronowerx programmers retain a major advantage over their competitors when it comes to creating new applications and maintaining current systems. They know the operating system's secrets, having access to ancient documentation written by Henry Starling himself. Agents of the Science Ministry keep trying to uncover these old manuals and break Chronowerx's hold over the computer industry, with no success so far. Consequently, even Starfleet's computer engineers must rely on contractors and consultants from Chronowerx. As such, the corporation has made itself a mission-critical component of the Imperial war machine, and one hell of a lucrative enterprise.

Current Chronowerx owner Javiera Starling maintains a reclusive existence, never leaving her luxurious suite on the interstellar passenger ship *Antheraea Polyphemus*. (The cruise line is just one of dozens of Chronowerx divisions unrelated to its technology business.) Rumors persist that she is no longer entirely Human.

Chronowerx CEO Peter Whiteside recently topped *Fortune* magazine's annual "Ten Most Lethal Executives" list, after single-handedly dispatching six Gorn mercenaries who boarded his shuttlecraft and held him and his family for ransom. Despite the glowing press coverage, Chronowerx insiders say that the incident left Whiteside shaken and tentative. If Whiteside is replaced, a large-scale shake-up will certainly follow.

Keeler Aerospace

One of the largest contractors to Starfleet, Keeler Aerospace builds *Inquisition*-class starships and the DS-K series of prefabricated starbases, among other basic building blocks of the imperial navy. For every Starfleet vessel they produce at their Mars-orbiting Dystopia Planitia shipyards, they build another five civilian vessels elsewhere.

The founding Keeler family hasn't controlled the company since it was taken over by Chronowerx in the early 21st century, and it's changed hands several times since then. The shadowy consortium that currently owns it keeps its affairs out of the public eye. Rumor has it that Revenue Minister Harry Mudd recently acquired a minority interest in the consortium in exchange for the forgiveness of a mammoth bill for back taxes.

Something of a showboat, Keeler CEO Bryan Woodlee gladly interposes himself between the consortium he reports to and the spotlight's glare. His many highly-publicized vacations alongside his recent bride, debutante Lenore Karidian, have done little to distract him from the bottom line: he just rammed a lucrative deal to research a successor craft to the *Inquisition*-class through the War Ministry's Resource Acquisition Bureau.

Caduceus Incorporated

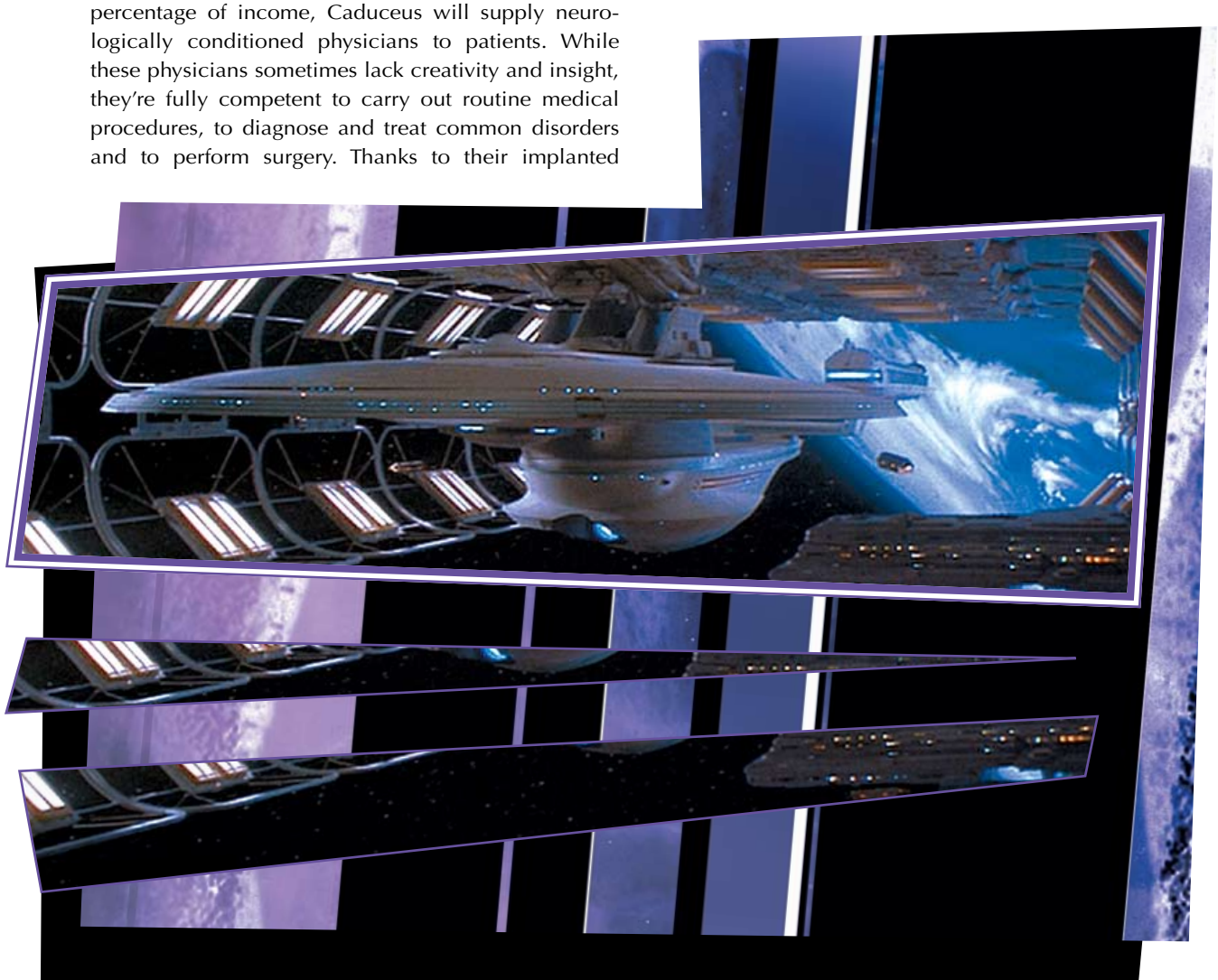
Wherever interstellar parasites and mutant bacteria dwell, the well-armed research teams of Caduceus Incorporated won't be far behind. Intrepid scientists of this pharmaceutical giant tirelessly comb the Galaxy for new diseases to cure. Naturally, the fruits of their research don't come cheap. Caduceus CEO Michelle Taunton earned admirable infamy during the Arkosi's Fever epidemic on Vagaria V, when she demanded—and got—Cr500 trillion for the formula to a vaccine her scientists had developed. Even Starfleet medical officers fear the phaser-backed zeal of Caduceus research teams, who'll stop at nothing to keep others from cracking possibly lucrative pharmacological secrets.

Caduceus also offers a rare and competitive service. In exchange for a monstrous flat fee and a monthly percentage of income, Caduceus will supply neurologically conditioned physicians to patients. While these physicians sometimes lack creativity and insight, they're fully competent to carry out routine medical procedures, to diagnose and treat common disorders and to perform surgery. Thanks to their implanted inhibitions, their service is always utterly loyal. What's the price of guaranteed top medical service with no mistakes or chance of betrayal from a bought-off physician? That's negotiable—depending on the favors that Caduceus thinks it can extract.

Tal-Shaya Partners

Although Vulcans found the Human sense of logic to be deeply flawed in many ways, they did see a cold and satisfying geometry in the structures of Terran corporations. Since first contact, Vulcans have built a number of business enterprises capable of competition with any Earth equivalent. The one that truly captures the imagination is Tal-Shaya Partners, a banking empire that finances everything from starbase construction to assassination schools. Be you Emperor, Senator, entrepreneur or mercenary, someday you'll need to approach a Tal-Shaya loan officer for a little operating revenue. Be prepared for the squeezing of your life; there's nothing quite so uniquely terrifying as discussing collateral with a Vulcan.

Unusually, Tal-Shaya is still run by its founder, the Vulcan philosopher Revok. His recent tome of financial advice, *Infinite Profit in Infinite Diversity*, just completed its third year as the Galaxy's best-selling business book.



Distribution of Wealth

The richest ten per cent of Imperial citizens own a full seventy per cent of the Empire's resources. Of course, legislators and corporate moguls constantly work to change this, turning the percentage closer to eighty or ninety.

The top dogs of the Empire—Senators, bureaucrats, tycoons, Starfleet officers—stand to earn and squander large sums of money. A small middle class schemes energetically, hoping to make the leap up into the top bracket of earners. Beneath both classes, legions of working men and women toil fruitlessly at various menial, meaningless jobs, hoping merely to put bread on the table. One might think they'd object to their lot, wanting to rise up and cut the throats of those of us who freely enjoy the Empire's abundance. And certainly, the odd peasant revolt does erupt from time to time. But these are largely affairs of the subject and vassal worlds, where individuals feel excluded from the Empire's progress. Among Humans, even the most destitute scroungers feel like they're a part of the general prosperity of the Empire. Any competent citizen might look at that grime-caked toiler coming home from his shift at the sewage nutrient extraction facility and think that he has no chance whatsoever of rising in any significant way from his lowly station in life.

Luckily for the glitterati, that misbegotten drudge thinks otherwise. Every night he parks his tired behind on a threadbare couch and stares at a procession of audio-visual broadcasts, each providing him a tantalizing glimpse of the power and privilege enjoyed by the elite. He thinks he has a chance to one day join the ranks of the cruel and seductive people he sees on his screen. All he has to do is keep working on the invention he's been designing in his head for the last decade, find the right agent to read the screenplay he's been dreaming about, or win the lottery. Naturally, it helps that broadcasts routinely feature inventors plucked from obscurity, suddenly celebrated screenwriters, and lucky lottery winners. If someone were to propose to any of these addled proles that the ruling class should redistribute their wealth to grunts such as themselves, they'd threaten him with a good sock in the jaw. No fair taking away the privileges they one day expect to earn, before they get their fair shot at them! Besides, the proles want their rulers to be mighty, to protect them from enemies. They don't even mind the odd display of arbitrary and ruthless power, so long as no one they know happens to fall as its prey. The working man loves to see criminals and rebels viciously executed. He derives vicarious joy from the conquest of each new subject world. He believes that if he is only strong enough, vicious enough, smart enough and lucky enough, one day *he* can be the one on top of that system—and he's not about to tear it down until he attains his piece of the pie.

Slavery

Not everyone under bootheel is a willing participant in his own degradation, alas. The Empire also depends mightily on the labor of billions of captive laborers. The long, proud history of slavery proceeds in an uninterrupted line from the days of the Pharaoh Menes to the present. Charlemagne kept slaves; Gandhi kept slaves. So does every other man and woman of means in the Empire.

Slaves serve, obviously, many menial tasks, but aside from working difficult, dangerous and demeaning jobs, they are more prominently symbols of status. Anyone can scrape together a handful of credits. Owning and maintaining a retinue of slaves, on the other hand, requires real capital, managerial skill and the constant income to back it up. By the same token, slave ownership marks a member of the gentry. A true aristocrat doesn't have to put his own clothes in the refresher or replicate his own meals—he has a slave to do it for him. It's a measure of personal authority and the willingness to exercise power over others. In a sense, it is a microcosm of the Empire, and therefore a source of Imperial pride as well as a symbol of wealth.

Naturally, slaves often find themselves in unenviable positions, ranging from indentured wage-earner (rented out to a corporation or individual in order to provide even more profits to the owner) to pleasure object. Since slaves have no personal rights and aren't considered legitimate beings in court, any owner can kill, torture or use a slave with impunity.

In the Unfortunate Event of Your Being Enslaved

Some people are born slaves; their parents were slaves, so they are, too. Others become slaves during adulthood. Some suffer enslavement as the outcome of criminal court cases, or for triggering punishment clauses in civil contracts.

Ambitious people such as yourself sometimes suffer enslavement. Thus, it is wise to know what do in this unfortunate eventuality. You may, for example, run afoul of the Emperor and his ministers, many of whom (that is, all but the ministers of Genetic Purity and Vassal Affairs) have the power to summarily enslave Terran citizens and inhabitants of subject worlds. Likewise, the Senate may, by a two-thirds vote, enslave any citizen other than the Emperor, one of his ministers, or a Starfleet officer ranked higher than Ensign.

Slaves created by decree or Senatorial vote are immediately borne to the nearest auction house, where bidders vie for possession both in person and via two-way subspace transmission. Rarely do more than a few hours pass between the decree and the exchange of ownership papers.

Slavery need not be a permanent condition. Your relatives or allies may buy your freedom from your owner; the traditional fee equals 150% of the original purchase price. It may be negotiated up or down, depending on the circumstances. Your owner may at any time simply give you your freedom. He will most often do so as a reward for exceptional service: you might, for example, save his life. Owners customarily free elderly and well-behaved slaves so that they can enjoy a few years of retirement as full citizens. Finally, the Emperor or a Senate majority may command the release of a slave. In these cases, the Imperial treasury disburses an expropriation fee equal to 200% of the original purchase price. (Some profiteers, thinking that a particular, newly-enslaved noble will be pardoned shortly thereafter, bid on him in hopes of doubling their money upon his freedom decree. This practice is known as "slave flipping." You'll be lucky to be purchased by a slave flipper, since their profit depends on warehousing their merchandise in good condition.)

Enslavement is shameful, but not cripplingly so. Emperors Sherman, Hitler, and Stephane Louvin were all slaves at one point or another; Hitler was even born a slave. Enslavement for political reasons is less disgraceful than having been born to a slave mother. If you don't at least get threatened with enslavement now and then, you're probably climbing your way to power too timidly.

Slavery in Crime and Punishment

The Empire imprisons only the most dangerous fraction of its convicted criminals. Jailing malefactors costs the state money that could be better spent on warships or circuses. As slaves, robbers and swindlers earn their keep and more. Violent criminals go to reconditioning centers for pharmaceutical and surgical rehabilitation before being auctioned off. No soft-bellied patrician wants an untreated serial killer chauffeuring his young wife around. Only the few incorrigible cases who don't respond to the cranial realignment process, along with political prisoners, end up in penal colonies such as the notorious establishment on Tantalus V.

DAILY LIFE

As a member of the patrician class, your life in the Empire is good. You get up in the morning, summoning slaves and servants to attend to your toiletry needs. You eat a delicious breakfast, painstakingly made from exotic ingredients ranging from pancakes with Hydran berries to garlic-seared slices of *targ* bacon. Should you overeat, you need only visit your vomitorium before heading down to the baths to lounge with your fellow kingpins, trading scurrilous gossip and offering backseat advice on the prosecution of the Empire's current wars. At the baths, you and your friends wolf down the choicest dishes from a buffet of staggering proportions.

After disposing of lunch, you'll retreat to your club, from whose ostentatious antique chairs you can conduct your daily business. You can entertain clients, make deals via communicator, or use your club's computer console to check your books or survey your inventory database. After a few hours of this kind of backbreaking work, the rest of the afternoon is yours. You can go to the stadium to watch the fights, head down to auction square to size up the latest shipment of slaves, or close your chamber doors to sharpen your command of the sensual arts. Traditionally, the dinner hour must be suffered in the company of your spouse, children, and the various other toadies and hangers-on you call relatives. The evening is reserved for gambling, arts events, the consumption of intoxicating substances, and further carnal activity. As you finally lapse into unconsciousness, you can take satisfaction in the completion of another successful day.

Naturally, your routine varies depending on your responsibilities to the Empire. Starfleet personnel face the regimented routine of naval life, expanding their sensual boundaries only during shore leave. Senators must show up for the occasional vote, and so on.

Lower-level bureaucrats and functionaries work for more than a few hours each day, but still enjoy their own share of leisure activities from the gustatory to the sensual. They look forward to the day when they'll live it up as their superiors do now.

Slaves and laborers face an existence of deprivation, discomfort and spine-wrenching work best left to the imagination. They make possible the pleasures of the patrician class. Without them, there would be no one to dominate, threaten, or exploit. And what fun would that be?

Fear Is the Coin of the Realm

The exchange of favors forms the bedrock of all activity in the Empire. Lowly citizens rely on local strongmen for jobs and protection from harm. Small bullies ally themselves with larger ones. Big bullies pay tribute to protectors in the official power structure, from revenue officials to Senators. The lowliest free worker can always be connected to a Senator or high official by about six degrees of exploitation.

For example: the sewage plant worker we mentioned earlier fears the shift bully. He does favors for him and pays extortion money to avoid getting beaten up. The shift bully fears the floor supervisor, doing the same for him. Likewise, the floor supervisor fears the plant manager, who fears the regional director, who fears the vice-president in charge of operations, who fears the CEO. The CEO fears the Senator and the science Ministry Official to whom he owes his contracts. The Senator must please his backers and avoid the displeasure of the senior Senators of his faction. The Ministry Official fears his superior, who fears the minister, who fears the Emperor.

What You Can Get Away With

With this system of accountability in place, "don't do anything I wouldn't do" becomes society's highest law. If you know the person immediately above you on the ladder of exploitation wouldn't care about a given action and won't stop protecting you if he finds out about it, feel free to go ahead and do it.

For example, the Science Ministry wants results. It doesn't care what happens to your test subjects. So if you're a medical researcher, you can do whatever you want to those foolish or desperate enough to sign up as guinea pigs for your experiments. For that matter, you face no restraints against experimenting on patients who come to you seeking cures for entirely unrelated conditions. Even Starfleet medical officers follow this strategy—provided, of course, that their relationships with their captains are strong enough. (Most of them look forward to the day when they can retire on royalties from a drug they've discovered and kept from the prying eyes of the admiralty and Science Ministry.) So what if a doctor from another dimension thinks you're running a torture chamber?

The trick, of course, is to ensure that none of your experimental subjects enjoy the protection of patrons with more pull than your own. Let's say that you grow a Klingon liver in the cerebrum of a patient who comes to you seeking treatment for a minor respiratory condition. Regrettable side-effects send the patient to another doctor, who finds out what you've done. If the patient's patrons are of no account, you have nothing to worry about. But if she turns out to be the illegitimate daughter of a Senator's son, you're suddenly in serious trouble. The Senator outranks not only you, but the starship captain who protects you. The captain would have to be a fool to put his hide on the line for you. He'll cut you loose, claiming that your activities were completely unauthorized. You'll find yourself in the slave auction pen before you can power down your tricorder. Take heart, though: maybe your new owner will have a suitably fatal condition, which you can cure in exchange for your freedom. Once free, you can take grim revenge on the patient, the Senator, and that back-stabbing ex-captain of yours.

LOVE, LUST, AND DOMINATION

Two groups of people populate the upper reaches of the Empire. One uses power to get sex; the other uses sex to get power. How symmetrical it all is!

Denizens of the Mirror Universe boast (and may even actually possess) higher sex drives than their counterparts in the standard universe. They also face virtually no social restraints in the public expression of that sexuality. What the Federation calls sexual harassment is in the Terran Empire considered a popular activity enjoyed by men and women alike.

Both sexes must attend to their pre-assigned roles in the great game. Men must seem dominating, virile, and forever in pursuit of sexual conquest. Women apparently allow themselves to be acted upon; they are seduced, overcome, treated as objects.

Naturally, the reality of the situation reveals further complexity. The heedless males often turn out to be completely in the thrall of the supposedly passive women who offer them sexual favors. Some men recognize this; others have no conception of how quickly their schemes would collapse without the tactical advice they receive in the guise of pillow talk.

The official corridors of power are barred to women; they can't be Senators or Emperors. Women aren't technically forbidden ministerial posts, but rarely attain them. They do, however, often excel as lower-echelon bureaucrats.

Still, most women can only exercise their power behind the scenes. Ministerial secretaries, in fact, run some departments. Few think that Revenue Minister Harry Mudd would have survived even a month in office without his briskly efficient secretary, Magda Kovacs. In gratitude for her services, Mudd recently paid for cosmetic surgery to make her stunningly beautiful. Magda's new allure will give her another way of exercising her power; Mudd had better hope she doesn't discard him.

Starfleet, an institution where failure means death instead of embarrassment, can't afford to arbitrarily deny itself the talents of half the population. Women earn full responsibility there. Why, in a year or two, there might even be more than a half-dozen female starship captains. There might even be a female admiral in the next couple of decades.

RACE AND STATUS

As long as one's Human, skin color and ethnic heritage don't mean much in the 23rd century Empire. Two thousand years ago, the Romans learned to strengthen themselves by embracing the barbarians who would otherwise have destroyed them. Today, men are judged by their ability to dominate others, a trait only a few cranks associate with a specific nationality or racial group.

On the other hand, people do take strength from their national heritage. They build statues to the finest killers, wickedest generals, and most cunning politicians associated with their ethnic groups. They proclaim their national cuisine superior to any other, follow customary sports and art forms, and use traditional holidays as an excuse for orgiastic revelry. This is more a reflection of the Terran enthusiasm for fine foods, public events, and orgies than it is an indication of any deep-rooted national feeling.

Aliens In the Empire

While race matters little, species matters a great deal. Humans are clearly superior to all others; look how many worlds they've conquered! Even members of the proudest vassal race must keep their heads down when the Humans get to boasting of their innate preeminence. Non-Humans are still widely referred to as "aliens."

An alien can expect all of the Humans around to comment continually on his "foreign" status. Even supposed Human friends will make continual, hackneyed jokes about alien appearance and habits. Terrans in general base their expectations of alien behavior on species stereotypes, rather than the ways in which a given alien has distinguished himself as an individual. There are two choices: whine about this, or use it as an advantage. Subjected aliens bemoan their state and struggle to get ahead in a system that will always favor Humans. Successful aliens, on the other hand, play up their stereotypes and then surprise opponents with their individual talents. While it always feels good to be respected, sometimes it is more useful to be underestimated.

SODALITIES

So there you have it: An Empire where life is brutish, nasty, and short—if you're lucky. A place where no one can be trusted, and betrayal is never less than a dagger-thrust away.

Having heard all this, you may be contemplating stealing a runabout and heading off to the mountains of Halka to live as a hermit, subsisting on a diet of lichen and spring water. Don't despair. There is a way to cheat the odds and live to a ripe old age, while still enjoying all of the Empire's fruits. The secret is simple: cultivate allies you can trust. Band together with a small group of like-minded individuals. Never betray them for any reason, petty or grand. Behind every great man lurks a coterie of fellow conspirators who'd sooner die than turn on one another.

Imperial movers and shakers often belong to small groups called *sodalities*. Sodality members swear a secret blood oath to one another early in their careers, swearing to help individual members when they need it, for the benefit of all. Sodalities may be made up of men from the same neighborhood, grade school chums, classmates at Starfleet academy, entry-level employees of a particular corporation, or paper-pushers in a department of the Imperium. Your sodality is only as strong as its individual members. Some prefer to join sodalities in which all members belong to the same organization, so that they can concentrate their efforts on pushing themselves up its hierarchy. Others want to bond with conspirators across a broad spectrum of Imperial life, putting a much broader range of skills and contacts at their disposal.

The sodality is a Human invention, but ambitious aliens adopt the practice in hopes of evening the odds against the omnipresent Terrans. Some calculating sodalities, wishing to draw upon the widest possible scope of experiences, include both Humans and aliens.

If you don't belong to a sodality already, find one fast. Find other misfits and malcontents and forge that bond of trust, before you get left behind. Not every sodality is perfect. When a group does break up, the recriminations can be ten times more vicious than a conflict between strangers. But without one, you'll have no one to cover your back when you go in for the kill.

THE IMPERIAL STARFLEET

So, you want to join the Imperial Starfleet? Excellent! Starfleet is one of the best routes to advancement and personal power in the Empire… assuming you survive the experience. The Starfleet is a symbol of the Terran Empire itself: strong, powerful, ruthless, and efficient, something that strikes terror into the hearts of our enemies. To be a Starfleet officer is to uphold a long tradition of advancing the power of the Empire, while advancing your own power as well. More than one Emperor has risen from the ranks of Starfleet to supreme power over the Empire itself.

STARFLEET AND THE EMPIRE

To many subject worlds and species, Starfleet *is* the Empire, or at least the only part of the Empire they will ever see. Starfleet is the Empire's strong right arm, carrying out the commands of the Emperor and ensuring that no act of rebellion against the Empire goes unpunished. Starfleet also explores the Galaxy, seeking out new worlds to conquer for the greater glory of the Empire. It is with Starfleet's help that the Empire has grown, and the Empire relies on Starfleet for its continued growth and protection.

As the Empire must rely on Starfleet, Starfleet holds considerable power. Starfleet officers are some of the most influential people in the Empire, ranking with Imperial Senators and other high officials. Admirals and even brash captains have shaped the future of the Empire, like the glorious Captain Garth's ascension to the Imperial Throne. That is why so many people seek to join Starfleet, because it offers a route to greater power and influence, although this is not always an easy road.

Some might say that Starfleet is the true power behind the Empire. This is true, but only partially. Starfleet is the enforcement arm of the Empire, but the Emperor is careful not to allow any Starfleet officers to accumulate too much power. The Emperor who allows Starfleet too much free reign is an Emperor who is quickly replaced by an ambitious Starfleet officer, such as the case of Emperor Garth's rise to power. The Emperor and the Senate carefully play the leading officers of Starfleet against each other. More importantly, high-ranking officers must always be on guard against ambitious subordinates looking to advance their own position through the elimination of a superior. Despite military disciple and the need to work in groups to survive deep space missions, Starfleet personnel must constantly remain vigilant about the threats behind as well as the dangers ahead.

STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS

Starfleet Headquarters, built around the ancient Presidio Fortress in San Francisco, is a stronghold of Imperial might. It is from here that the Commander of Starfleet issues orders to fleet officers, and it is here that the will of the Emperor is heard and transmitted throughout the fleet. Starfleet Headquarters is a complex maze of activity and opportunity for those who learn to navigate its labyrinthine corridors and its complex web of allegiances and plots.

Most officers ultimately seek an appointment to Starfleet Headquarters, where the true power of the fleet lies. Once they are here they can begin working their way up final rungs of the ladder, to the level of the Joint Chiefs and even the rank of Starfleet Commander. Ambition runs thick as blood through the corridors of the Headquarters as admirals scheme against one another, plotting the downfall of their enemies and the elevation of themselves and their allies.

In more recent years, some officers have questioned to conventional wisdom of gaining power through a position at Starfleet Headquarters. Emperor Garth was a field officer, after all, and he parlayed his power and influence in the field into support strong enough to allow him to take the throne. Many young officers are following the Emperor's example by building networks of allies for themselves on the outskirts of the Empire, hoping to raise a powerful enough force to return and claim power for themselves. They must take great care not to draw too much attention to themselves, lest their superiors consider them a possible threat and order one of their subordinates to assassinate them and take their place.

The Starfleet Commander

The Starfleet Commander is the supreme power in Starfleet, answerable only to the Emperor and the Imperial Senate. It is one of the most influential positions in the entire Empire, and many Starfleet officers aspire to hold it, enough to keep the Starfleet Commander involved in fending off challengers for his position. The Commander-in-Chief's bodyguard is the most efficient in Starfleet, and the Commander uses the considerable resources of Imperial Security to ferret out and eliminate any potential challengers before they become a problem.

The Starfleet Commander oversees the Joint Chiefs of Starfleet, his subordinates, and most often the direct challengers for his position as head of Starfleet.

The Joint Chiefs

The Joint Chiefs are the heads of each major department of Starfleet. They make up a council that oversees and controls Starfleet as a whole under the direction of the Starfleet Commander. Each individual department chief has his or her own personal agenda to further, along with an extensive network of agents, henchmen, and allies to see that it is carried out. Of course, each chief also forms alliances with other chiefs to further their mutual goals, while working against enemies among the other chiefs, in the Imperial Senate, and so forth. These activities, along with their regular duties, keep the members of the Joint Chiefs quite busy.

For the most part, the Joint Chiefs are willing to cooperate on matters that further the cause of Starfleet as a whole, although there is often disagreement on what is and is not good for Starfleet. Along the way, the chiefs work to further their own plans, strengthen their positions, and arrange the downfall of their enemies. Some choose loyalty to the Starfleet Commander, counting on the rewards that come from loyal service should the Commander be elevated to a higher position. Others prefer to arrange the elimination of the Commander in an effort to take that position for themselves. Naturally, doing so requires a considerable amount of support from the rest of the Joint Chiefs and enough power to back up such a claim.

STARFLEET DEPARTMENTS

Starfleet is a vast organization; it has to be in order to control an area as vast as the Empire. The Imperial Starfleet has several major departments handling all the various duties it carries out, from exploration and conquest of new worlds to research into valuable new technologies and day-to-day operation of facilities.

THE MIRROR ACADEMY SERIES

Looking for an interesting twist on the Academy Series idea? Consider running an Academy series set in the Mirror Universe, where Starfleet Academy is just as ruthless and cutthroat as the rest of the fleet. Cadets can struggle to deal with their classes, handle threats from upperclassmen and other cadets looking to get ahead by making them look bad, and tests intended to weed out the weak. Narrators can play such a series as darkly humorous or deadly serious. Cadets that survive can "graduate" to a full-fledged Mirror Universe series. See "The Mirror Toolkit" (p. 140) for more information.

- **Fleet Operations:** Fleet Operations oversees the deployment of starships to different sectors of the Empire, and handles things like personnel assignments and assigning starships to various missions, as requested by other departments. Fleet Operations is also responsible for maintaining the readiness of the Imperial Starfleet, ensuring that each vessel is properly maintained and ready to serve the Empire. As you may imagine, Fleet Operations is one of the most influential departments in Starfleet because it controls the fleet's vessels. The Chief of Fleet Operations can frustrate the plans of other departments by delaying their requests and tying them up in red tape, or simply ignoring them altogether. Of course, a Fleet Operations Chief who turns the rest of the Joint Chiefs against him isn't likely to hold the job for long, unless he has considerable support elsewhere.

- **Starbase Operations:** The Office of Starbase Operations oversees the Empire's many starbases, deep space stations, and other permanent facilities, including border posts and monitoring stations. Although most tend to think of Fleet Operations as the best route to power and influence through the command of a starship, the commanders of Imperial starbases should not be underestimated, particularly those given control of newly conquered territory. These representatives of the Empire often rule entire worlds in the Emperor's name, giving them a strong power-base to work from. Of course, they must also face the possibility of rebellions and have fewer opportunities to discover new and valuable resources, but officers from this department can wield considerable power.

- **Starfleet Security:** Although agents of Imperial Security protect the Empire, Starfleet has its own Security department to protect the organization. Security officers are some of the most influential on board starship and starbases, since they monitor all activities on board and report this information to the commanding officer or a designated subordinate. Security officers also command some of the best-trained soldiers. Low-ranking security officers have the unglamorous job of being thrust in the way of whatever dangers the officers may encounter. High-ranking security officers oversee political correctness, indoctrination, and all of the plots that weave through a Terran ship or base. It's important to pay off the security chief, so that he'll expose plots against you while turning a blind eye to your own indiscretions.

- **Corps of Engineers:** The Starfleet Corps of Engineers handles major construction projects throughout the Empire. Some of their most important work includes the design and construction of new starships and starbases. Although it is possible to gain considerable influence within the department, the Corps of Engineers is largely considered a dead-end for personal advancement. For this very reason, engineers are often indigent and choose to lord what power they have over their subordinates and those in need of their services. For a captain in a strong position, Starfleet engineers are useful toadies to get important work done. Those in lesser positions find the Corps of Engineers uncooperative, arrogant, and petty. If you are a command officer, value a good engineer, but don't allow them to forget their station. If you are an engineer, use you power where you can, but don't forget about the enemies you may make along the way.

- **Science:** The Science Department is like the Corps of Engineers in many ways; filled with arrogant intellectuals who like to lord their superiority over anyone they can, but who generally grovel before those with greater power or influence. Science presents more opportunities than engineering because scientists have been known to discover useful technologies or natural phenomena on distant alien worlds. Of course, they must ensure that credit for their discoveries goes to them and not their commanding officer. A wise commander uses scientists for the information they can provide, but doesn't allow them too much latitude. A scientist in control of a valuable discovery can use it to go a long way in Starfleet.

  One of the most important branches of the Science Department is the Starfleet Medical Corps. The doctors and nurses of the Medical Corps are charged with maintaining Starfleet crewmembers in proper physical condition to carry out their duties. They also study the many different threats to life found in the exploration of space, and how these can best be used to the Empire's advantage. Starfleet doctors are rulers of very small fiefdoms indeed—a sickbay or infirmary and no more—but they are absolute rulers. It is best to have a doctor as an ally should you be injured or in need of their services but, as most Starfleet officers would advise, it is even better not to need them in the first place. Leave your enemies to the tender mercies of the Medical Corps rather than yourself.

- **Colonial Affairs:** The Department of Colonial Affairs oversees the Empire's expansion and conquest, making them another of the most influential departments. They decide which worlds merit immediate conquest, which should be taken over

more slowly, and which worlds should be left alone, at least for the time being. They also decide which worlds should be annihilated rather than conquered. Implementing their decisions is left up to Fleet Operations, so Colonial Affairs is often at their mercy. Fortunately for them, Starfleet officers are more than pleased to carry out their orders when it comes to conquering a new world and seizing its riches.

The department also handles the Empire's colonization programs and the administration of subjugated populations. This places Colonial Affairs close to Starbase Operations, and the two departments are traditional allies as well as rivals in their mutual sphere of operations. Starbase commanders and planetary governors must often deal with the demands of Colonial Affairs, and CA officers are often dependent on the goodwill of a local starbase commander when carrying out operations in their area.

- **Strategic Operations:** This department is responsible for planning the strategic defense of the Empire against all enemies. It is a key department, both in the protection of the Empire as a whole, and as a potential obstacle for would-be Emperors and other upstarts. Strategic Operations develops plans to protect the Empire from invasion and enemy attacks, strengthening its borders and key strategic areas. It also issues recommendations on the deployment of ships and starbases and provides the Emperor and the Joint Chiefs with regular reports on the security of the Empire. Anyone planning a coup or other action against the current order must carefully avoid the plans and watchful eyes of Strategic Operations, or else have allies within the department willing to look the other way. Sometimes it is possible to catch Strategic Operations by surprise. Captain Garth did so when he led his fleet to seize control of the Empire. Now Strategic Operations is more watchful for threats from within the Empire as well as from without.

Chain of Command

The most important thing for Starfleet officers is to understand the chain of command, how to use it to their advantage, and how to avoid trouble with superior and subordinate officers. The bridge and corridors of a starship or starbase may be the most difficult battlefield an officer faces—at least in comparison to the Empire's external enemies. Knowing how the chain of command works can mean the difference between success and death in an agony booth.

Positions

There are a wide number of duties on board a starship or starbase, requiring a large crew to carry them out. Starfleet routinely fields crews of 300 or more. Within this large crew are a number of important positions, primarily the commanding officers, department heads, and bridge crew.

Commanding Officer

The Commanding Officer is, of course, in command. It is the position all officers aspire toward, and are willing to kill (many times) to achieve. Commanding officers achieve their position through a combination of skill, drive, and ruthlessness, allowing them to overcome all obstacles that stand in their way, including their predecessors.

Some captains are content with their position and spend their time maintaining it and enjoying the privileges of their rank. Others have higher ambitions, to achieve admiral rank or even higher. They use their command to build the support and influence they need to achieve their goals. In either case, a commanding officer must be utterly ruthless in order to maintain discipline and guard against those who covet the position for themselves.

First Officer

A first officer is the chief lieutenant and henchman of the commanding officer. Ironically, he is also the one with the most to gain from the commanding officers sudden and unexpected demise. First officers must carefully balance the two to work themselves into a position of authority and trust. Captains learn to find a first officer they can trust, then never to trust them. After all, most captains remember when they were first officers, and how they got to be captains.

The first officer is responsible for ensuring the crew functions in an efficient manner. This means the first officer is usually responsible for maintaining discipline and punishments as needed (unless the commanding officer is a "hands on" type). This makes the first officer feared by the crew, a useful tool. First officers can also know more about how a ship or starbase really runs. Learning the ins and outs of the crew and the assignment can give first officers an edge when it comes to dealing with their commanding officer eventually.

Helmsman

The helmsman is responsible for steering a starship, handling all flight control operations. Since helmsman is a bridge position, it is often a good opportunity for junior officers to work their way up the ladder. It is not unknown for an ambitious helmsman to get promoted to a higher position when misfortune befalls his superiors. Still, helmsman is a fairly low position in the hierarchy, and a smart helmsman watches out for the whims of his or her superiors. A helmsman who fails to perform to the commander's satisfaction may be punished as a lesson in job performance.

Navigator

The ship's navigator plots courses across space and often handles routine sensor sweeps and similar astrogation information. Like the helmsman, the navigator is generally a junior bridge officer with some opportunities for advancement, provided he or she is clever and careful enough. Navigators often work closely with the helm and may develop as allies, but all junior officers have to remain wary of the ambitions of their contemporaries unless they want to serve as a mere step in someone else's climb to power.

Science Officer

The Science Officer mans the science station on the bridge of a ship or starbase and handles sensor sweeps, library computer access, probes, and similar scientific and information functions. Science officers control information, which is their sole resource and source of leverage. In general, science officers have few opportunities for advancement unless they move into the command branch, such as with science officers who also serve as first officer. Otherwise, science officers are best served to maintain the favor of their commanding officer (or their next commanding officer if there is an ambitious first officer waiting in the wings).

Still, science officers understand that knowledge is power, if it is applied correctly. Research into alien worlds and technologies can turn up information and objects of extraordinary value. The trick is keeping this information from the rest of the crew long enough to make use of it. This is a serious gamble; either turn the information over to the captain, earning his favor and allowing him to take most of the credit and power. Or else keep the information to yourself and hope you can use it before your captain finds out and has you executed… unless you can eliminate him first.

Security Officer

The ship or station's Security Officer maintains security, handles intruders, and may also serve as tactical and weapons officer, a vital role in battle (these later functions are often controlled by the helmsman). The life of a security officer is a true tightrope, walking between the opportunities for power and influence presented by the position, balanced against the dangers of choosing a side in an uncertain struggle.

In general, Security remains loyal to the captain, and the security officer may serve as one of the captain's personal bodyguard. It is well known that one of the most important steps in gaining control of a ship or starbase is acquiring the loyalty of the Security personnel, or at least the security officer. Having Security look the other way when a plot against the captain is unfolding is vital if it is to succeed. Sometimes Security can be distracted or otherwise convinced to stay out of the way, even if they do not immediately change their loyalties. Once the new commanding officer is in place, wise Security personnel swear loyalty to him or her in order to avoid the inevitable purge of those loyal to the old order.

It is certainly not unknown for an ambitious Security officer to take matters into his own hands when it comes to the elimination of a superior officer, especially when a good opportunity presents itself. Sometimes all a security officer has to do is look the other way. If the coup attempt succeeds, you may gain in rank. If it fails, you can claim ignorance, although that may not save you from the wrath of an angry captain.

Communications Officer

The Communications Officer handles all comm traffic, both internal and external, on board a ship or station. This is a commonly overlooked position in the bridge hierarchy, since many consider the role of communications officer little more than that of a glorified assistant. Clearly such fools do not realize the power you can hold behind the scene, nor the value of information.

The Communications Officer is in a position to know almost everything that goes on aboard ship. By monitoring routine communications, you can learn a great deal about your crew and their activities. Of course, many will use personal communicators for their clandestine messages, but even those transmissions can be detected. And communications off the ship or station must always be routed through you. The potential for blackmail is vast, as are the opportunities for passing information into the right hands, for a price.

Chief Engineer

The Chief Engineer oversees the engineering staff and maintains and repairs the systems of the ship or station. Engineers have a certain degree of influence because of their responsibilities, but it does not extend much past their own department. An engineer may be the absolute ruler of his engine room, but that power ends when the captain calls down demanding to know why the warp drive is not operating at peak efficiency.

For this very reason, a Chief Engineer overworks his subordinates while he uses his technical knowledge to make problems sound more serious than they really are, so that he can take more credit when they're fixed. As a Chief Engineer, you can usually delegate most tasks to your underlings and take credit for them later. Just make sure you keep on top of what everyone in your department is doing. You wouldn't want a particular innovation to reach the attention of the captain or first officer before you can claim credit for it.

Chief Medical Officer

The Chief Medical Officer is in charge of keeping the crew physically capable of performing their duties. Like the Chief Engineer, you can be the absolute ruler of your own domain (the sickbay) but you have little influence unless someone chooses to enter your sphere of influence. Of course, once they are in your sickbay, they are yours to do with as you please.

Starfleet doctors have almost endless opportunities to test out new techniques, treatments, and drugs on their patients. They are also some of the first to examine and vivisect new life forms for study, yielding useful biological information. In some cases they are permitted to dabble in genetic engineering and germ warfare, although the Empire generally prefers to use other methods to deal with troublesome species (such as bombarding their planet from orbit).

As a Chief Medical Officer it is wise to remain in the favor of your commanding officer, or to cultivate a patron to protect your interests. Medical officers have only limited advancement opportunities in Starfleet, unless you make an opportunity by plying a command officer with drugs or neurological treatments. Being the power behind the command chair can provide considerable freedom and protection from your enemies.

Captain's Mate

An unofficial "position" in the ship's crew that is tradition in Starfleet is that of the Captain's Mate, more commonly known as the "Captain's Woman" or "Captain's Man" depending on the particular captain's tastes. The Captain's Mate is a favored lover who holds the captain's interest and therefore earns certain special privileges. These include better quarters (often the captain's own suite), finer luxuries and, of course, the personal attention of the captain. Although they are little more than playthings, Captain's Mates can wield considerable power and influence behind the scenes, and crewmembers know better than to cross a Captain's Mate, since their transgression is sure to get back to the captain.

Becoming a Captain's Mate can be a fast way to achieving power and influence, provided you find a suitably generous officer to attach yourself to. Captain's Mates are usually Starfleet crewmembers, but are sometimes civilians, particularly Orion slaves. Some captains treat their mates quite well, lavishing them with gifts as proof of their own abilities. Some are even foolish enough to trust their mates, believing a mere pleasure toy could not possibly be a threat to them. They often learn their error at the point of a knife or phaser. Other captains treat their mates more harshly, usually to keep them in line, while some have been known to juggle more than one mate at a time. Captain Janice Lester, for example, usually has two or three "Captain's Men" to please her, and plays them expertly off one another to keep any one of them from becoming a threat to her.

Despite the term "Captain's Mates" are often found in the company of higher-ranking officers as well, although rarely if ever attached to lower-ranking officers. A department head or first officer might be able to easily attract a mate, but they rarely have the power to given them any special privileges.

Rank

In the Imperial Starfleet, as in life, rank and position are all-important. Your rank determines your authority, power, and influence in Starfleet. Attaining a higher rank, and keeping it, are prime activities of any Starfleet officer. Sometimes fate may favor you with an opportunity to move up in the ranks, such as the elimination of a superior for their own foolishness. Most of the time, you have to make your own opportunities and arrange openings in the ranks above so you can move into them.

The chain of command generally follows rank and seniority, although personal influence can often be as important as seniority. A ship or starbase has a commanding officer and a first officer. If they are unavailable, command then falls on the most senior commander on board. If no commanders are available, command falls to the most senior Lieutenant Commander, and so forth.

Saluting

Officers of the Imperial Starfleet salute each other by custom, as a sign of authority. Lower-ranked officers salute first, followed by the highest ranked officer present. The Imperial Starfleet salute is made by placing your right fist over your heart, then extending your arm out, hand open and palm out. Officers who are seated must stand before they salute. Failure to salute a superior officer in a proper manner is punishable by agonizer, usually carried out on the spot by the offended officer.

Rank Hath Its Privileges

Imperial officers of high rank have many special privileges and opportunities open to them. They have more spacious quarters, more luxuries, a greater share of any booty taken on missions, and greater latitude in spending it. They use their influence to attract and maintain their own personal bodyguards, agents, and other henchmen to carry out their wishes. As you work your way up through the ranks you can experience many of these privileges for yourself.

High-ranked officers have complete authority over their underlings, dealing with them in any way they see fit. As a captain you literally have the power of life and death over your crew. You may have to answer for your actions to a superior officer (who has power over you) but otherwise you can do as you please with regard to your inferiors. If a crewman offends you, you can have him tortured in an agony booth or even killed on the spot. However, beware of an excess of cruelty toward your inferiors. The right amount of cruelty inspires fear and respect, but too much casual killing of junior officers may lead them to unite against you and attempt to replace you with a commander more to their liking.

IMPERIAL STARFLEET RANKS

Admiral
Commodore
Captain
Commander
Lieutenant Commander
Lieutenant
Lieutenant (Junior Grade)
Ensign

Agents and Henchmen

One of the ways higher-ranking officers ensure their position is through the recruitment of agents and henchmen. Henchmen are generally lower-ranked crewmembers who swear loyalty to you above all else (including loyalty to the captain, unless you happen to be captain). You know you can count on them to a greater degree than you can on most crewmembers because they have a strong interest in seeing you succeed. If you succeed, your henchmen know they will be rewarded. So long as you remain strong and successful, your henchmen will remain confident and loyal for the most part. It's when you begin to look weak that henchmen begin looking for a way out, to avoid being dragged down with you. A weak officer is often betrayed by his or her own henchmen, looking to curry favor with a strong replacement.

A particular type of henchman is the bodyguard. No officer of the rank of Commander or higher would ever be without at least one personal bodyguard. This is an especially loyal henchman willing to defend you against your enemies and watch out for attacks against your person. Most high-ranking officers have several bodyguards, particularly since they have a tendency to end up dead quite often. Crewmembers accept the position of bodyguard because it is one of the surest ways of proving your loyalty to a patron and gaining their trust. Of course, some bodyguards later abuse their position or turn against their patron, so officers never trust even their bodyguards completely.

Agents are more distant from their masters than henchmen. Agents operate behind the scenes, often concealing their true loyalties to better serve their patron. Agents are often Starfleet personnel, but they do not need to be, and many officers have civilian agents serving them in a variety of ways. Although they primarily serve to gather information, acting as their patron's eyes and ears, agents carry out many other duties. These include gathering evidence for use in blackmail, stealing items of interest to their patrons, altering computer records or otherwise greasing the wheels of the Imperial bureaucracy, and carrying out missions of kidnapping, assault, and assassination at the command of their patron.

Agents are a powerful unknown quantity, since it is difficult to be sure how many agents an officer may have. While henchmen are usually well known, agents may be anywhere. An apparently loyal henchman may in fact be an agent of your worst enemy. Many agents are also fanatical enough to remain loyal to their patron even after their patron's death, and more than a few assassins have found themselves targeted by their victim's agents, seeking to avenge his or her death.

Promotion and Advancement

The pursuit of promotion is one of the most important things in the life of a Starfleet officer and one of the great opportunities Starfleet offers. Imperial citizens who might not otherwise have any great power to speak of can, through their own cleverness and skill, rise through the ranks of Starfleet to become admirals… or even beyond. A crewmember may be able to earn a promotion through diligent service to an influential patron, working as a bodyguard or trusted henchman, for example. Some few promotions also come directly from Starfleet Command, as a way of recognizing service to the Empire, and often as a result of some influence the officer is able to bring to bear to convince Starfleet Command of his or her "worthiness."

But a Starfleet rank and commission is for life (however long that life may last). Although some officers managed to live long enough to retire, opening up their position so lower-ranked officers can advance, the number of voluntary retirements is not nearly enough to satisfy the needs of Starfleet's officers, so some involuntary "retirements" must be arranged. Officers advance in ranks through the elimination of the higher-ups, forcibly making room for upward mobility.

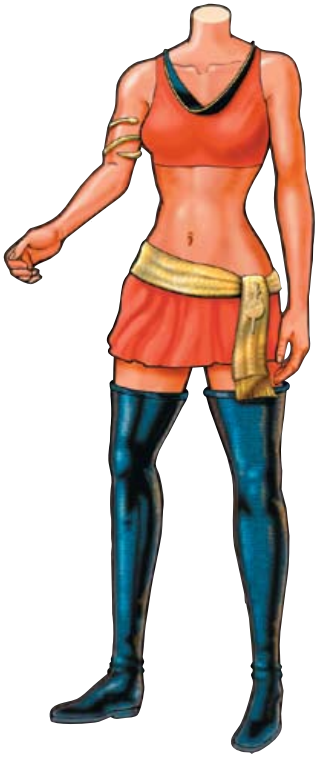
Most ensigns gain their promotion when a superior kills the ensign's chief—*someone* has to take the lieutenant's place, after all. An ensign attached to the right patron can guarantee a plum promotion each time another crewmember's performance is fatally unsatisfactory. Higher ranking officers must do their own dirty work, or arrange the services of their pawns. After all, if an ensign manages to kill a foolish commander, then both the ensign and his lieutenant commander patron are in line for promotions. And, of course, a failed assassin usually ends up dead, and tells no tales.

Starfleet Command must still confirm promotions gained through the elimination of a superior. Starfleet rarely refuses to confirm such a promotion, but it can do so for reasons of its own, especially if the officer was sloppy or careless. Eliminating superiors in a way that endangers a ship or its mission will not endear the officer to Starfleet Command, nor earn a reputation for skill or efficiency. The truly promotion-hungry officer always arranges the demise of his superiors in a fashion that leaves no doubt as to the real killer, but gives no concrete proof. That is the ultimate in promotion in the fine Starfleet manner.

THE AGENT SERIES

An interesting option for a Mirror Universe series is one where the players all take the roles of agents of a particular patron, such as a high-ranking Starfleet Commodore or Admiral, or even someone like an Imperial Senator or the Emperor himself! Their patron uses them as elite "troubleshooters" to ferret out the plans of his enemies, gather useful information and materials, and carry out covert missions of sabotage, kidnapping, and assassination. The characters can be Starfleet officers, civilians, or a mix of the two. Although they all serve the same patron, the characters can (and no doubt do) have personal agendas to advance, and one or more of them may even be double agents working for someone else.

The agents can remain loyal to their patron or try plotting against him, perhaps at the instigation of a new potential patron. Or the agents' patron might be killed, leaving them to decide whether or not to avenge his death. Of course, if the agents are reluctant to do so, their patron might have taken steps to ensure their compliance, such as a slow-release toxin or genetically engineered retrovirus. Only by eliminating the assassin can they acquire the cure. Then they are left with the decision of finding a new patron or striking out on their own somehow.



FEMALE OFFICER'S UNIFORM

MALE OFFICER'S UNIFORM

CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM

Uniforms

The Imperial Starfleet uniform is designed to show its wearer's rank, status, and position in Starfleet. The standard uniform consists of black trousers and boots, a colored tunic with rank insignia, and a gold sash worn around the waist. The female uniform consists of a colored skirt and halter-top, gold sash, and thigh-high boots. A service dagger is considered part of the standard uniform, and officers carry them at all times. The color of the uniform indicates the wearer's branch of service. Gold indicates command, blue for sciences, and red for ship's services. Officers commonly display medals and other indications of achievement on their uniform tunic.

Regulations

Although commanders exercise considerable latitude in their decision-making, the Imperial Starfleet is still an organization based on rules and regulations. You may run your ship or station (or department) as you please, but you still have to answer to Starfleet Command for your actions. Violations of Starfleet regulations can result in various types of discipline, ranging from momentary punishment with an agonizer to demotion, removal from duty, or execution. Bend or break the rules, if you wish, but be aware of the consequences of your actions.

The Prime Directive

The first and most important regulation of the Imperial Starfleet, its Prime Directive, is "Terror Must Be Maintained." The Terran Empire rules the stars with an iron fist, and dissenting or rebel populations must be reminded of the price they pay for defiance. The Empire cannot appear weak or else it will crumble, set upon by other civilizations like a wounded deer by a pack of hungry dogs.

The Empire learned a harsh lesson about the necessity of maintaining terror among the masses. When the *I.S.S. Ranger* went to claim Qo'noS for the Empire, the captain of the *Ranger* felt the warlike and imperialistic nature of the Klingons would make them useful subjects of the Empire, and powerful soldiers. He was half right, and although the Emperor showed unprecedented mercy in offering the Klingons the status of Praetorian Guards, the Klingons fought on. Ever after, rather than breaking the spirit of the Klingons, the Empire achieved only a surface conquest. The surviving Klingons fled to the fringes of Imperial space, and are beginning to go from a nuisance to a potential threat against Imperial power. It is for this very reason that the Prime Directive was established. Mercy is the worst trait a starship captain can show to a world because it gives subject races and new species hope, keeping that spark of rebellion alive rather than crushing it utterly.

The Prime Directive is enforced with a policy of zero-tolerance for rebellion or defiance of the Empire. Planets that refuse the Empire's requirements are bom-

barded from orbit with phaser and photon torpedo fire until they see the error of their ways and comply. Otherwise their civilization is reduced to smoking ruins, and their population is fit for nothing other than being taken away as slaves for the Imperial borite and rodium mines. Pirates, raiders, smugglers, and other criminals are hunted down and executed. Political dissidents must either recant their rebellion against the Empire (following a period of suitable punishment in an agony booth) or they are executed, along with any that foolishly chose to follow them.

These punishments serve as examples to others of the price of defiance, and teach them not to do so in the future. It is the foundation the Empire is built on.

Regulations

Starfleet's standard regulations cover the performance of the crew's duties and all the day-to-day operations of Starfleet. They describe what is expected of each crewmember, which has access to particular information or areas of a ship or station, proper modes of dress and comportment, and so forth. Regulations are strictly enforced on most Starfleet ships and facilities in order to keep the crew in line and ensure maximum efficiency at all times.

Directives

Directives are orders coming from a superior officer. Unlike regulations, they are not permanent rules of conduct, but temporary requirements placed on a Starfleet officer or crew. Directives have all the weight of regulations, however, and ignoring an order from a superior officer is a sure way of earning swift and serious punishment, depending on the level of the infraction. A directive can come from any level above the officers who receive it; a captain can give a directive to any member of his crew, or even his entire crew, while the Starfleet Commander can issue directives to the entire Imperial Starfleet as a whole.

Starfleet officers have been known to get creative when it comes to interpreting directives given to them. If you plan on twisting the wording or timing of a superior's directive to suit your own purposes, make certain whatever you are planning is successful enough to allow your superior to overlook what you've done. In this case you might only have to take a brief touch from an agonizer. Even better is when you can twist a superior's orders to make yourself look good and make them look incompetent or foolish in the eyes of their own superiors. This can lead to the elimination of a weak superior and an opportunity for advancement, assuming that your superior doesn't simply have you executed for disobeying orders, of course.

Guidelines and Traditions

As a military organization, Starfleet is full of unwritten rules. Indeed, the rules you don't find in the manual are often the most important. Learning the unwritten rules of Starfleet is one of the things many cadets fail to pick up at the Academy. Once you are in the field, you need to learn them in a hurry if you intend to make it through your cadet cruise all the way to a full commission. The officers who learn to navigate the unwritten rules as well as the standard regulations are the officers who advance the fastest.

Here are some of the more important unwritten rules and traditions of the Imperial Starfleet you should be aware of:

- **Trust No One.** Rule Number One of Starfleet survival. Of course it will be necessary to delegate a certain amount of responsibility and authority to others as you advance in power and influence. But do not trust even your closest allies and advisors too far, or you are likely to end up with a knife in the back, or simply vaporized by a phaser blast from one of your "trusted friends." Value allies for what they are, but do not make the mistake of thinking that anyone can ever be really trusted.

- **Respect the Captain's Mate.** The Captain's Woman or Captain's Man has great influence, far outweighing whatever official position he or she might hold. Learn who the Captain's Mate is, and give him a wide latitude. If you can curry his favor, that may be useful, but be careful about captains who become jealous. If you intend to seduce the Captain's Mate (or be seduced by him) make sure the captain doesn't find out until he is as good as dead (and maybe not even then).

- **Avoid Sickbay.** Pay close attention to your medical skills training at the Academy and practice your first aid and treatment skills. Do your very best to avoid having to go to sickbay, since the doctors there are more likely to use you as a test subject for their newest drug or treatment device, which probably has nothing to do with the original reason you went there in the first place. For medical treatment, rely as much as possible on the one physician you can trust: yourself. In the meanwhile, do your best to make friends and curry favor with the medical officer and sickbay staff. If you are forced by circumstances to go to sickbay, it pays to have some influence there.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES: THE CAREER OF CAPTAIN JAMES T. KIRK

A fine example of advancement in Starfleet is Captain James T. Kirk, commander of the *I.S.S. Enterprise*. One of Captain Garth's early proteges, the young Lieutenant Kirk used his mentor's influence to arrange an assignment on board the *I.S.S. Farragut* in 2254, immediately following his graduation from Starfleet Academy.

Kirk served on board the *Farragut* for three years until 2257, when Captain Garrovick was killed by a mysterious "vampire cloud" creature near Tycho IV after Lieutenant Kirk "hesitated" to fire the ship's phasers against the creature. Kirk moved up in rank to Lieutenant Commander following the Tycho incident and arranged to be assigned to the *I.S.S. Enterprise*, under the command of Captain Christopher Pike, where he made the acquaintance of Lieutenant Spock, a junior science officer.

While on a landing party, Kirk discovered the Tantalus Field in the looted laboratory of a dying alien scientist. With this device at his command, Kirk began slowly and systematically working his way up the ladder of command on board the *Enterprise*. By 2262, he was first officer on board the ship and later that year he arranged for the "disappearance" of Captain Pike and assumed command of the *Enterprise* with Spock as his first officer. The ship departed on a five-year mission of exploration and conquest in 2264.

The early missions of the *Enterprise* proved both successful and profitable for Kirk and his crew. Kirk put down rebellions on the Vega IX colony and Gorlat. The *Enterprise* raided into Romulan space, providing a necessary show of force against the Romulan Empire. In 2267 Kirk executed Chief of Security Ben Finney for plotting against him. Lt. (j.g.) Hikaru Sulu assumed Finney's rank and position.

Shortly after Finney's execution, Lt. Commander Spock seized control of the *Enterprise* and directed it on a course for the forbidden planet of Talos IV, after imprisoning Captain Kirk and Commodore Mendez of Starbase 11. This "mutiny" was actually a ruse by Spock and Kirk to allow the *Enterprise* to approach the planet and bombard it, in order to destroy the Talosians, whose power of mental illusion posed a threat to the Empire For his actions, Spock was promoted to the rank of Commander and both men earned medals from the Empire.

Kirk ended the conflict between Eminiar VII and Vendikar by bombarding both planets until they were forced to surrender to the Empire. He also dealt with a threat to Imperial mine workers on Janus VI, capturing the silicate creature stalking them, and seizing its eggs for study. He put down a minor Klingon incursion into the Organia system before the Klingons could land on the planet. Kirk also oversaw the conquest of Gamma Trianguli VI and Coridan as new subjects of the Empire. Only his brief replacement by his Federation counterpart allowed Spock to overthrow him shortly after the Halkan mission.

- **Never Show Weakness.** Signs of weakness include being merciful to your enemies as well as not having the strength of will and stamina to carry out whatever tasks your superiors assign to you. Weakness invites attacks from all quarters, both superior officers who want to break you and inferiors who would like to have your position. It is like fresh blood in shark-infested waters. Do everything you can to conceal any potential weaknesses or failures, shifting the blame to others when possible.

- **While the Cat's Away, the Mice Will Play.** It's only a violation of regulations if you're *caught*, and only then if it's by a superior officer with the ability to discipline you. The word of an inferior is generally useless against yours, unless they have some compelling evidence, and perhaps not even then, unless your infraction is something to concern the captain or first officer. Use the opportunities when your superiors have their attention elsewhere to advance your own agenda and enforce the idea among your crewmates that you are a force to be reckoned with.

Discipline

Maintaining discipline is vital to the operation of Starfleet. Junior officers must know what is expected of them and what will happen if they fail to live up to those expectations. Violating regulations presents great opportunities, but an equally great risk of punishment. Like the policies of dealing with other worlds and other species, discipline maintains the rule of fear in Starfleet and serves as an example to all officers and crew of the penalties for failure.

Discipline rests entirely in the hands of superior officers, who can handle routine discipline of their crews as they see fit. Maintaining a suitable balance of fear and reward is the mark of a skilled commander, who knows how to keep the crew in line, but is not so harsh that the crew chooses to rebel rather than continuing to serve. The unfortunate truth is you cannot execute your entire crew, or even a large portion of them, or else you find yourself with no crew at all. Fortunately, it rarely takes more than an occasional execution to keep any crew in line.

Agonizers

Agonizers are the simplest way to handle routine discipline and punish minor infractions. Before the development of agonizer technology, such punishments had to be carried out manually, usually with beatings or whippings, crude techniques that threatened to impair the subject's ability to function. The agonizer, on the other hand, is simple, elegant, and highly effective.

Each crewmember in Starfleet carries a standard issue agonizer on his or her person. It is a small device, fitting easily into the palm of the hand. The crewmember is expected to surrender his or her agonizer to a superior officer upon request. It is considered traditional to use the individual's own agonizer to administer punishment. In this way, the agonizer becomes associated with discipline, and carrying it serves as a constant reminder of the penalty for disobedience and failure.

The agonizer is usually placed above one of the major nerve clusters in the chest, although it can be used anywhere on the body, and works through normal clothing. It uses neural induction to stimulate the body's pain receptors, causing intense, burning pain radiating out from the point of contact. The pain becomes more intense over a longer period of contact, but even the initial touch of an agonizer is enough to render most Humanoids virtually helpless with pain. Once the agonizer is deactivated, the pain vanishes instantly, leaving few lingering side effects (although the physiological effects of the pain, such as heightened adrenaline levels and so forth, remain).

The length of exposure depends entirely on the violation and the whims of the officer applying discipline. Generally speaking, a few seconds (perhaps as many as thirty or forty) is standard for most types of minor infractions, with times upward of a minute for a true "object lesson." As Academy cadets quickly learn, a minute of agonizer treatment feels like an eternity of pain. But it is still nothing compared to the more serious punishments available.

Agony Booths

More serious matters call for more severe punishments. While the agonizer serves well for minor infractions, serious discipline is carried out using an agony booth, several of which are installed in any Starfleet facility's brig. The agony booth functions on the same principle as the agonizer, but its neural induction fields affect the entire nervous system at once, producing intense pain in every nerve in the subject's body. The booth's controls finely control the intensity and type of pain inflicted, and Imperial "pain technicians" specialize in understanding the breadth and depth of pain it is possible to inflict on Humanoid life forms. Booths have transparent aluminum doors, to permit others to observe the subject's pain, often before being placed in the booth themselves.

An agony booth monitors the subject's pain threshold, ensuring no permanent damage is done, unless that is what the operator desires. A subject can be tortured in an agony booth for hours without suffering any permanent physical damage. Of course, it is also possible to inflict enough pain that the subject's nervous system overloads, causing cerebral hemorrhages or cardiac arrest. Although it's possible to kill a person almost instantly using an agony booth, booths are designed to make death as slow and painful as possible.

AGONIZERS AND AGONY BOOTHS: GAME TERMS

AGONIZER

SPECIFICATIONS: 5 x 5 x 1 cm, mass .1 kg

RULES: The agonizer, when placed near the flesh of almost any humanoid and turned on, causes intense pain. If the subject is unwilling, this requires a successful melee strike; the agonizer isn't really designed for use as a weapon. On a hit, the victim suffers wound penalties as if he'd just taken 30 points of damage (see page 147 of the *Star Trek RPG Player's Guide*). The victim can make a Stamina reaction test (TN 15) to lessen this to 15 points. This isn't cumulative damage; if a healthy victim with a 7 Health score suffers the agonizer for several turns, he spends each of these turns at the same effective wound level. This also isn't "real" damage; one turn after the agonizer is removed, the character returns to normal.

Because of the wound penalties, a character under the effects of an agonizer is often more susceptible to various skills—so officers will often discipline their subordinates with a tongue-lashing (and use of the Influence skill) while the poor sod writhes in pain on the floor, unable to resist.

DURATION/ENERGY: 2,000 charges (1 charge per turn)

AGONY BOOTH

SPECIFICATIONS: Cylindrical booth 2.5 m tall x 1.5 m diameter; 210 kg.

RULES: The typical agony booth experience functions similar to an agonizer, but it has an effect as 50 points of damage (25 if the subject makes a Stamina reaction test, TN 20). Furthermore, an operator can choose to overload the subject's neurons and inflict very real damage. In fact, this is a risk if an untrained operator uses the device; using the agony booth requires a System Operations (TN 10) test, and species medical modifiers apply (so a Vulcan operator might "accidentally" push the settings too high for a Human and injure or kill him). A skilled user can set the booth to inflict 1 point of damage per turn, or 1d6 points of damage, if desired, although this is a bit more touchy (TN 15). On a catastrophic failure, the device either suffers a malfunction and breaks down, or else tunes the pain levels too high and causes the victim's system to overload and go into neuroleptic shock (which is almost instantly fatal).

DURATION/ENERGY: Powered either by a Starfleet vessel's energy grid or a planetary power source, the agony booth effectively has unlimited energy as long as its primary power source remains functional.

Execution

The most severe penalty is, of course, death. Execution is the standard penalty for an attack on a superior officer, and any disobedience that results in the death of a fellow officer, especially a superior. Executions are usually carried out by agony booth, allowing the subject to suffer as much as possible before the end, and serving as an example to others.

Officers have considerable latitude in carrying out an execution and may choose any method they wish. Execution by spacing (ejecting the offender into space without a pressure suit) or by phaser were once quite common in Starfleet, and are still sometimes used by traditionalists, but they are both generally considered too quick and merciful by modern Starfleet officers.

Exile

Although serious violations of regulations are usually handled by time spent in an agony booth or execution, some commanding officers have been known to merely expel offenders from Starfleet. While some may take this as a show of mercy, more often than not exiles are marooned on distant worlds far from the refuge of the Empire, usually with little or nothing in the way of resources to aid their survival. Even on Class M worlds, such exiles are essentially sentenced to a slow death by starvation or exposure. Those few who manage to survive have nothing to look forward to but a lifetime alone, struggling to survive, and holding on to the faint hope of rescue. Many would prefer even a lengthy execution to such "mercy."

MISSIONS

The Imperial Starfleet handles a number of different and vital missions for the Empire, ranging from discovering and taking new worlds to protecting the Empire from threats both internal and external, and studying the mysteries of space, seeking new resources the Empire can use.

Exploration

One of the most important missions of the Starfleet is the discovery and exploration of new worlds for the Empire. Starfleet uses various unmanned probes and subspace telescopes to chart and study distant star systems on the frontiers of Imperial space. Starfleet vessels explore systems with promising qualities (such as an abundance of planets) or unusual features (particularly Class M planets). If a system has anything of value, then Starfleet claims it in the name of the Empire. If a system has something—such as a civilization or technology—that is potentially dangerous to the Empire, then Starfleet is charged to deal with it.

Exploration missions offer tremendous opportunities to Starfleet crews. Newly discovered systems may contain a wealth of resources valuable to the Empire, a portion of which goes to the crew, encouraging them to seek out and explore the most valuable systems. More importantly, exploration offers a crew the opportunity to discover new Class M worlds, either worlds suitable for colonization, or planets with existing civilizations to conquer.

Also, do not underestimate the value of exploring so-called "dead" worlds, planets that once supported life that has since become extinct. The ruins of alien civilizations offer the possibility of information or technology more advanced than anything in the Empire. Loot unearthed from such places may serve simply to make a crew rich, or it may contain artifacts of tremendous power. Possession of an alien weapon or defensive system may give an officer the power to rise quickly through the ranks, perhaps even set eyes on the Imperial Throne itself. Certainly, Captain Kirk's discovery of the Tantalus Field contributed greatly to his meteoric rise to power.

Conquest

The other most important mission of Starfleet is conquering new worlds for the Empire, allowing it to expand its sphere of influence. Missions of conquest carry the most glory and the greatest potential for profit, but they are also the most dangerous. Although conquering a less-developed species is a fairly simple matter for the mighty starships of the Empire, do not underestimate the cunning and resourcefulness or even a primitive enemy. Orbital bombardment may reduce cities to slag and rubble, and may crush any conventional military forces, but the goal of conquest is to capture a planet whole and intact, not reduced to a burned-out cinder devoid of life. An especially defiant world may need to be destroyed as an example of what happens to those who defy the Empire, but that means you have failed to conquer that world.

Ideally, a starship arrives at a new world and presents its government or governments with an ultimatum: join the Empire or be destroyed. Some worlds capitulate almost immediately, but most choose to resist, at least at first. For pre-warp civilizations, their weapons and defenses are usually no match for an Imperial Starship. After a few of their major cities are destroyed, they realize the error of their ways and surrender. For other worlds, it requires additional devastation to ensure a complete surrender.

Once the world's government has surrendered, the captain of the ship can officially take control of the planet. Any remaining pockets of rebellion are crushed, sometimes with the help of the planet's own Security forces, but usually using the ship's resources. The public executions of rebel leaders and government dissenters instill fear in the population. At this point the crew generally loots the planet of its most valuable and portable resources, particularly artworks, examples of technology, and so forth. Over time, an Imperial government and garrison are put into place to rule the world in the Empire's name.

The conquest of fairly primitive worlds like Gamma Trianguli VI requires only a single Starfleet vessel. More advanced civilizations may require additional starships, sometimes even a small fleet, to conquer. Of course, once the Empire takes territory, it is necessary to defend it.

Defense

Starfleet is responsible for the protection of the Empire and its worlds from all enemies, external and internal. External enemies are primarily other interstellar civilizations, including the Romulan and Klingon Empires. Internal enemies are rebels, terrorists, and political dissidents, along with criminals such as smugglers and pirates, who threaten shipping and travel in the Empire.

The Empire stands strong against its external enemies. The Klingons frequently raid Imperial space along the shared border with their Empire, striking at shipping, colonies, and sometimes even moving deeper to attack settled or conquered worlds. The Klingons represent the most serious border threat to the Empire and Starfleet vessels are regularly called on to repel Klingon incursions. The Klingon hatred for the Terran Empire is undying because of the Empire's conquest of their homeworld Qo'noS. No matter how many Klingon vessels Starfleet destroys, and no matter how many Klingon terrorists and raiders it executes, the Klingons keep coming back for more.

The Romulan Empire and the Cardassian Union present less of a concern. The Romulans remain behind the Neutral Zone established at the end of the Terran-Romulan War in 2160. They make only furtive forays into Imperial space, which are easily handled by Starfleet's bases and ships along the border. The Cardassians likewise shelter behind the Badlands regions, sending only the occasional vessel into Imperial space.

Of greater concern is the fact that both Empires support pirates and smugglers in Imperial space. The Romulans and the Cardassians provide these criminals with supplies, weapons, even ships, to use in their activities. They then claim these resources were stolen from them in order to avoid Imperial reprisals. The Romulan *Tal Shiar* and the Cardassian Obsidian Order both covertly support rebellions on Imperial worlds and funnel resources to terrorists operating against the Empire. They do so in such a way as to insulate themselves from any complicity. All efforts by Imperial Security to trace these supply lines to their source have met with failure; agents of both Empires undergo neurological rewiring implants that cause them to suffer extreme agony when captured, and to die if they divulge any critical information.

Emergencies

Starfleet is responsible for handling emergency situations that arise in the Empire, including various natural disasters and the results of terrorist attacks, such as the grain famine caused by the Klingon sabotage of the Imperial grain reserves. Starfleet vessels provide assistance as directed by Starfleet Command.

When dealing with non-Imperial worlds and independent vessels, Starfleet is pragmatic. Imperial assistance is available to other parties, at a price. In some cases this may be a substantial amount of money or similar resources, while in the case of threatened worlds it may require the local government to join the Empire before Starfleet can "legally render them assistance." The impending doom of a civilization generally makes it quite reasonable in terms of negotiations with Imperial representatives.

Starfleet vessels are also responsible for dealing with biological threats such as viral or bacterial infections, or infestations of dangerous lifeforms. Standard Imperial procedure in this case is to contain and sterilize the affected area with as little loss of territory as possible. In some cases it has proven necessary to eradicate entire colonies to ensure the elimination of particular threats. The complete destruction of the Deneva colony by the *I.S.S. Enterprise* is just one example; Captain Kirk destroyed most of the life on the planet in order to guarantee the eradication of a species of neural parasites. Kirk justified his decision based on Imperial policy, claiming that the fact that his brother Samuel lived at the colony, and that he and Samuel hated each other, had no bearing on his actions. Likewise, the capture and study of dangerous, acid-secreting silicon-based life on Janus VI served the Empire's "pest control" policies, while freeing up the miners there to continue their work.

Research

Starfleet's exploration of the frontiers of Imperial space, along with its conquest of new worlds and civilizations, present many opportunities for scientific discovery. Starfleet and the Empire encourage this research, since they are aware that knowledge is power, and new scientific discoveries can lead to useful technologies for expanding the Empire's control and sphere of influence.

Starfleet vessels both explore new scientific phenomena, and assist in the experimentation and development of new technologies taking place at Imperial research facilities.

The Galaxy is filled with scientific unknowns, many of which may prove useful. Starfleet ships investigate things ranging from collapsing planets to neutron stars to learn more about them. Standard procedure is to ensure a new phenomenon poses no threat to the ship or the Empire. If it does, it is to be destroyed immediately. If it does not, then the crew makes a careful study of the phenomenon and how it may be useful to the Empire. For example, the study of gravitational forces at Psi 2000 provided significant data about how tidal forces can tear a planet apart. The accidental discovery of the Psi 2000 virus proved an unexpected bonus (albeit a bonus that nearly destroyed the *Enterprise* shortly after its discovery).

Starfleet vessels also provide test platforms for new technologies, from warp drive systems to improved shields to weapons. Sometimes this can also prove an opportunity for a clever captain, such as when the *I.S.S. Excalibur* was destroyed by another Starfleet ship during the testing of the M-5 computer system. An investigation cleared Dr. Daystrom of any complicity in the destruction of the vessel. (Dr. Daystrom's numerous Senate supporters, funded by his tremendous personal patent wealth and willingness to supply advanced computer technology to his allies, certainly helped.)

Training

Starfleet captains and station commanders conduct regular and vigorous drills and training exercises for their crews. Punishment for failure encourages crewmembers to improve their performance. Naturally, ambitious officers also train on their own, and often in secret, to improve their abilities and acquire skills useful to them. Starfleet Command stages "war games" and similar exercises from time to time to maintain the tactical readiness of their personnel.

Training exercises may present you with an opportunity to take action against an enemy, either within your own assignment or on board another starship. Starfleet training can be quite brutal, and "training accidents" have been known to happen, some of them fatal. The exercise can serve to conceal a real threat so the target underestimates the danger and doesn't see your plan until it is too late to react.

IMPERIAL SECURITY

The most feared organization in the Terran Empire—more feared than Starfleet, more feared than death itself—is Imperial Security, the force that maintains order within the Empire and acts on the orders of the Emperor and the Senate to deal with those who might threaten their power. If you have aspirations of attaining a higher rank at the expense of your superiors (and who doesn't?), you will have to deal with Imperial Security sooner or later. The trick is to ensure that it is "later" rather than "sooner," and that you can deal with Security on more equal footing when the time does come. As many Emperors and Senators have discovered, the only trouble in relying on an organization to guard your interests is who guards you against them?

ORGANIZATION

Although it is often considered a branch of Starfleet, Imperial Security is an independent organization, answerable only to the Emperor and the Imperial Senate, and not to Starfleet Command. This gives Imperial Security the authority it needs to police every aspect of life in the Empire, and ensure compliance with the Emperor's edicts and laws. It also makes the organization extremely powerful, and willing to use that power for its own ends.

Public Security

Most people in the Empire would consider the expression "public security" an oxymoron, since there is very little that is secure about the position of the lowest levels of Imperial society. This level of Imperial Security really involves maintaining order in the Empire, and ensuring that the lowest levels of Imperial society do not threaten their betters. At the same time, security ensures that the higher levels of the Empire do not threaten *their* superiors. In essence, Imperial Security functions to keep everyone in his or her place.

For the masses, this is a fairly easy matter. Imperial Security carefully monitors the populations of conquered worlds using spies, surveillance equipment, and mindsifter probes or telepathic scans to search for dangerous or disloyal thoughts. They also reward anyone who collaborates to turn in potential traitors, criminals, or terrorists, encouraging the local population to police itself. For slaves who know nothing but work and misery all their lives, the promise of any sort of comfort or luxury is a strong lure, difficult to resist.

The lowest classes of the Empire have nothing resembling a right to privacy, nor any other individual rights, for that matter. Imperial Security can enter their living quarters or work area at any time for surprise inspections. They may detain and interrogate anyone they deem suspicious, or that might have useful information (as defined by the local IS commander). Everyone fears being detained by Imperial Security, since it is well known they use torture and sanity-destroying mindripper probes to get what they want. The mere threat of detainment is usually enough to ensure cooperation from most people; although it is usually less amusing, it is more efficient.

When dealing with the higher-ranking populace, Imperial Security must move more cautiously. Although they have the authority to detain and question anyone, detaining an Imperial Senator or a powerful business mogul without excellent cause is almost certain to invite reprisals. More than a few Imperial Security offi-

"YOUR PAPERS, PLEASE."

One of the duties of Imperial Security on occupied or conquered worlds is ensuring that everyone on the streets has some business being there. To that end, the Empire often requires people to carry some means of identification, usually a small data-card that fits into a pad-reader to display information on its screen. This information includes the person's name, place of residence, legal status, workplace, and any other important information such as affiliation with any known dissident organizations, or a previous criminal record. Citizens under Imperial rule are expected to carry this identification at all times and present it to any Imperial Security agent who requests it. Failure to carry proper identification results in arrest and detainment until the individual's identity can be positively identified, with a genetic or brain scan. In some cases, the Empire may require all subjects of a specific type to wear particular markings or badges for prominent, easy discrimination—this most often happens as a humiliation tactic against an ethnic subgroup.

Naturally, there is an active black market in the creation of forged identification data-cards for a variety of uses, and some Imperial Security personnel earn a tidy sum on the side assisting such operations. Individuals with the appropriate contacts or influence can acquire forged identification with the Narrator's permission, perhaps requiring an appropriate skill test, such as Enterprise: Streetwise (Locate Contraband) or Negotiate (Bargain). The difficulty will often vary with the location and the credentials requested; it's harder to acquire identification that lists the user as an influential person with access to secret files, and it's also harder to acquire forged credentials in places where there's little market, like on prison worlds (as a rule of thumb, the base TN is 10, with a +5 or +10 modifier on a distant or uncivilized world, and another +5 or +10 if the credentials would supply unusual or extraordinary social class.)

Characters lacking such contacts—including people from the Federation Universe—may try to forge identification themselves. This requires a Computer Use (Hacking) test. The result of the test is the difficulty for someone else to determine that the data-card is a forgery. The Narrator may modify the difficulty based on the checker's thoroughness; a checker with a lot of time might be able to turn the check into an extended test against an aggregate difficulty (see p. 106 of the *Star Trek RPG Player's Guide*).

Example: Darren Keller wants to set up a fake identity for himself as Lemuel Durrant, a humble spice merchant. He acquires a blank data-card and makes a Computer Use (Hacking) test to program the fake ID. He scores a result of 9 on his test. When Keller… er, Durrant, is later stopped by an IS agent, the difficulty for the agent to detect that the data-card the "spice merchant" gives him is a forgery is 9, the result of Keller's Skill Test.

cers have found themselves reassigned to dangerous frontier regions of the Empire, while others have simply been assassinated in "incidents of random violence." If you plan on charging or even detaining someone important, you had best have evidence usable as blackmail security in a safe location, or charges devastating enough to end that person's influence. Otherwise, you'll have to deal with the consequences.

The most important task of Imperial Security in this area is maintaining public order and the stability of the Empire by whatever means necessary. If they have to publicly execute a dozen people in order to quell a riot, or destroy the mind of an informant to get a vital piece of information, that is what they do. Imperial Security isn't answerable for their actions to anyone other than the Emperor and the Senate, and they aren't interested in how the job gets done, so long as it gets done and doesn't interfere with them.

On Imperial-occupied worlds you can see Security agents everywhere, dressed in red shirts with gold sashes. Their presence is a constant reminder of the power and authority of the Empire.

Starfleet Security

While Starfleet has its own security forces, Imperial Security still oversees Starfleet operations. This gives Imperial Security officers a bit more influence than most Starfleet officers of their rank, although not enough to protect them from a superior officer's wrath if they push too far. An IS agent cannot present charges against a superior officer if he is executed for insubordination first, or killed in an "unfortunate accident."

Imperial Security agents operating in Starfleet therefore walk a tightrope between their duty to IS and their duty to Starfleet and their superior officer. Failure to uphold either one could result in execution at the most, a loss of position and prestige at the least. Still, IS officers have more influence to trade with potential patrons and henchmen in Starfleet, using their outside connections to get things done, or to have IS overlook certain matters to the benefit of their commanding officer.

Imperial Security is also a good place to work your way up through the ranks on board a starship or station. The Chief Security Officer is generally third in command, after the Captain and First Officer, so the only things standing between you and the command

chair are the two most skilled and ruthless people on board. Overseeing Security affords you opportunities to make opponents look bad, or simply to allow them to suffer from the results of their own carelessness while you "look on in surprise" as their enemies eliminate them for you. You can also arrange to frame enemies for crimes they did not commit and otherwise arrange reasons to arrest and either detain or execute them on the spot. Be careful that any such case you construct is airtight, otherwise it may come back to haunt you. Still, more than one skilled and clever Imperial Security officer has achieved the rank of Captain through the elimination of those few officers standing in the way.

Special Operations

The Special Operations division of Imperial Security handles matters requiring a show of force, but with a surgical precision rarely found in the ranks of Starfleet. Special Operations agents are highly trained commandos and strike-forces organized to deploy at a moment's notice from IS or the Emperor to handle problems throughout the Empire. Special Operations deals with matters like counter-terrorism, natural disasters, strikes against planetary targets where the use of orbital bombardment is inefficient, and assaults against various enemies of the Empire, particularly underground organizations and criminals like pirates.

Special Operations relies heavily on information coming to them from other branches of Imperial Security, particularly the Intelligence division. They have a tendency to blame their failures on inaccurate or misleading information rather than any fault in their own planning or execution. Oftentimes, they are correct, since other IS officers may have a personal interest in seeing a Special Operations mission fail, particularly if it is likely to uncover something incriminating. Misleading information can send a Special Operations team on a suicide mission.

Special Operations receives the most advanced equipment available in the Empire. This includes heavy weapons and body armor for assault missions, including photon grenade launchers and phaser rifles. They also use a variety of biotechnology available to Imperial Security to enhance the abilities of SpecOp agents or disable their targets. Unfortunately, this biotechnology has dangerous or even lethal side effects. For more information, see "Tools of Terror," page 57.

For this reason as much as the opponents they face, the life of a Special Operations agent is a dangerous one. Imperial Security considers SpecOps agents expendable, when necessary. (Actually, IS considers *all* agents expendable, SpecOps agents are just more expendable than others.)

Imperial Intelligence

The Intelligence division of Imperial Security is charged with gathering information on the Empire's enemies and protecting the Empire against the spies of other powers. They are aided in this mission by the stratified and tightly controlled nature of Imperial society, along with advanced Imperial technology, which makes it easier for them to pry information from less than willing subjects.

The espionage side of Intelligence spies on the various other interstellar powers of the Alpha and Beta Quadrants, including the Klingon and Romulan Empires, the Cardassian Union, and the Ferengi Alliance. The Klingons and the Romulans are the prime targets of Intelligence missions, although for different reasons.

Intelligence agents working to infiltrate the Klingon Empire look for information on new Klingon offensives, fleet strengths, and covert ties between Klingon raiders and pirates and the Klingon government. They also keep a close watch on Qo'noS, cutting off supply lines to underground rebel factions that constantly try to retake and repopulate the world, and keeping information on the happenings on the Klingon homeworld out of the rest of the Empire. Agents within the Klingon Empire take every opportunity to weaken the Klingon economy and government, particularly working to turn the Klingon houses against each other. The more the Klingons are at each other's throats, the less trouble they pose for the Terran Empire.

Intelligence agents operating in and around the Romulan Empire work to pierce the veil of secrecy that covers everything the Romulans do and learn more about what is happening on the other side of the Neutral Zone. Although the Romulans are not as active in harassing the Terran Empire as the Klingons, they still remain a serious potential threat, and so warrant careful watching. For their part, the Romulan *Tal Shiar* is ruthlessly efficient in weeding out Terran spies among their populace, so Imperial Intelligence has learned fairly little about whatever the Romulans may be up to.

The Cardassian Union is a similarly closed society, although warranting less concern than the Romulans. The Cardassians remain cloistered behind the Badlands region, making a few forays near Imperial space. However, the Cardassian intelligence community, known as the "Obsidian Order," has a fearsome reputation. The have certainly been extremely efficient in keeping Imperial Intelligence operatives away from nearly all information about the Cardassian government, military, or economy that might be useful. In fact, the Imperial Security officer in charge of intelligence operations within the Cardassian Union was recently killed by his subordinate, who produced evidence that his commander was in fact collaborating with the Obsidian Order and passing information on

the Terran Empire to them. Whether this was of his own free will or due to some form of Cardassian mental conditioning remains unknown. The new commander of the office immediately ordered a purge to root out any other Cardassian double agents in the ranks.

Intelligence operations involving the Ferengi Alliance are minimal, focused primarily on monitoring the loyalty of the Ferengi and keeping an eye on their black market operations which might adversely affect the Empire. Imperial Security has arranged several lucrative deals with the Ferengi in the past to ensure their business continues uninterrupted, with a healthy payment to the Empire for their trouble. Ferengi loyalties shift whichever way the winds of commerce blow, so they are carefully watched.

Research and Development

The Research and Development (R&D) division of Imperial Security studies and develops new technology. They focus primarily on technology useful to IS agents, particularly surveillance, interrogation, assassination, and sabotage missions. Much of the technology used by Imperial Security comes from the study of samples of alien technology acquired by Imperial starships exploring new worlds, as well as technology taken from conquered worlds or species.

R&D is particularly advanced in biotechnology and interrogation techniques, due to their ability to experiment on those brought in by Imperial Security for questioning or examination. Imperial interrogators regularly try out new techniques, experimental drugs, and prototypes on prisoners, usually with an enthusiastic R&D technician standing by to take notes on the prisoner's responses for future research. R&D also uses subjugated populations as experimental subjects, particularly political dissidents scheduled to be executed.

Research & Development is a useful, if somewhat dangerous, ally. They have access to the latest developments on Imperial technology, but many of these new developments are untested and dangerous even when perfected. If you are offered an opportunity to field-test a new R&D development, balance the possible usefulness against the possible risk and decide for yourself.

Operations

Imperial Security is charged with a number of different tasks in the Empire. Their primary goal is maintaining public order and protecting the Empire's interests. They do so using assassination, espionage, and terror as their tools. The major operations of Imperial Security break down into five main areas, described here.

Assassination

Often the easiest way to deal with a problem is to remove the person causing it. "Cut off the head, and the body dies," is a popular saying in the Empire, and one Imperial Security wholeheartedly subscribes to. Some of the finest assassins in the Empire work for Imperial Security, masters of death; either swift and silent, or slow and public, as required by the situation. While sometimes it is most expedient for a problem to simply disappear and never be heard from again, the Empire usually prefers clear evidence of an individual's demise in order to send a message to that person's supporters.

Assassination also serves as a political tool, allowing ambitious Starfleet officers and politicians to advance through the ranks and attain greater power. Although most are not squeamish about carrying out an assassination on their own, setting up an enemy for death at the hands of Imperial Security can often remove any chance that someone will trace the assassination back to you and choose to exact revenge against you.

Although the killers of Imperial Security are some of the best, the true masters of the assassin's art are generally found outside the organization. Some of these freelance assassins are in fact former IS agents who either chose to "retire" and leave the organization, then disappeared, or who faked their own deaths in order to pursue a separate career. A highly skilled assassin can command his or her own price in the Terran Empire, but must be wary of other assassins looking to make a name by killing a true master.

Counterintelligence

Imperial Security is responsible for detecting and dealing with foreign spies in the Empire. The Klingons present little problem in this respect. Although Klingon undercover agents and terrorists do launch attacks against Imperial targets, Klingons in general have little talent or patience for espionage. Still, wily Klingon leaders like Koloth have accomplished things like the poisoning of grain from Sherman's Planet largely because Intelligence underestimates the espionage abilities of the Klingons.

Imperial Intelligence does *not* underestimate the abilities of the *Tal Shiar* or the Obsidian Order. Intelligence keeps a close watch for agents from either of those organizations. *Tal Shiar* agents commonly pose as Vulcans, although they rarely attempt to do so on Vulcan, where they are ruthlessly tracked down and executed by the Vulcans themselves. The Obsidian Order prefers to work through intermediaries and double agents recruited from the Empire's citizenry rather than sending disguised Cardassian agents, a more successful tactic the Romulans are also beginning to employ.

Interrogation

The abilities of Imperial Security interrogators are legendary throughout the Galaxy. Everyone knows that, once you are in their hands, you will tell them whatever they want to know. It may take some time but, sooner or later, anyone can be broken, and Imperial Security uses whatever means are necessary to get what it wants, including the most terrible forms of torture imaginable.

Imperial Security relies heavily on advanced neurotechnology, such as mind-sifters, to pry information from prisoners (see below). They also use trained telepaths to read information from prisoners' minds, either covertly during an interrogation session, or directly through a mind meld. With such abilities, it is virtually impossible to hide information for very long. Those sought by Imperial Security have been known to commit suicide rather than be captured and interrogated. Romulan and Klingon agents are particularly known for disintegrating themselves—and everyone else in the vicinity—in order to avoid capture.

Sabotage

Imperial Security agents strike against the enemies of the Empire through acts of sabotage and terror intended to weaken them. The assassination of key figures is one of the most common forms of sabotage. Others include the destruction of vital facilities such as government buildings, supply depots, shipyards, and key military bases and outposts. Imperial Security agents plant bombs aboard ships and mine asteroid fields and other areas to cripple shipping and trade through an enemy region. Areas of the Klingon Empire are riddled with Imperial gravity mines and other weapons designed to destroy Klingon ships.

When dealing with planetary targets, the Terran Empire usually relies on Starfleet. The destruction of a few of a world's major cities is usually enough to bring its inhabitants to heel. However, on occasion, the Empire prefers a more subtle approach. In these cases a planet may be too well defended for a frontal assault, or a different sort of object lesson is required. Imperial Security generally relies on the Empire's advanced knowledge of biotechnology and bioweapons to provide these object lessons to defiant worlds. The destruction of a planet's ecosystem can quickly force the population into surrender, while the introduction of a deadly plague can kill off the inhabitants and still leave the planet ready for colonization once the bioweapon itself dies out.

Surveillance

"Imperial Security is watching" is more than just a common expression in the Empire; it is a way of life. Imperial Security monitors everything in the Empire to ensure loyalty to the Emperor and the maintenance of public order. They also keep careful watch on the Empire's neighbors, looking for signs of trouble and seeking out weaknesses the Empire can exploit to bring its enemies to their knees.

Imperial Security tracks the activities of citizens and subjects of the Empire through a vast network of computer information systems. Nearly everything in the Empire is computerized, so it is a fairly simple matter to track the daily activities of most people. Computers monitor activity logs and alert Imperial Security of suspicious patterns of behavior, allowing them to bring suspects in for interrogation. IS agents also conduct spot checks and surprise inspections of homes and businesses to ensure compliance with the Empire's requirements.

Imperial Security gathers information on foreign nations and individuals through its network of spies, informants, and undercover agents. Starfleet vessels and disguised IS ships perform scans along the borders of the Empire, and Imperial Security maintains listening posts along areas like the Romulan Neutral Zone, the Badlands, and the outskirts of the Klingon Empire, keeping watch over the Empire's enemies.

TOOLS OF TERROR

Imperial Security has a wide variety of technologies at its command to carry out its missions. In addition to all the technology used by Starfleet—such as phasers, transporters, and agonizers—IS also uses specialized neurotechnology designed to gather information and brainwash subjects, as well as biotechnology to enhance the abilities of their agents and to kill or disable their enemies.

Neurotechnology

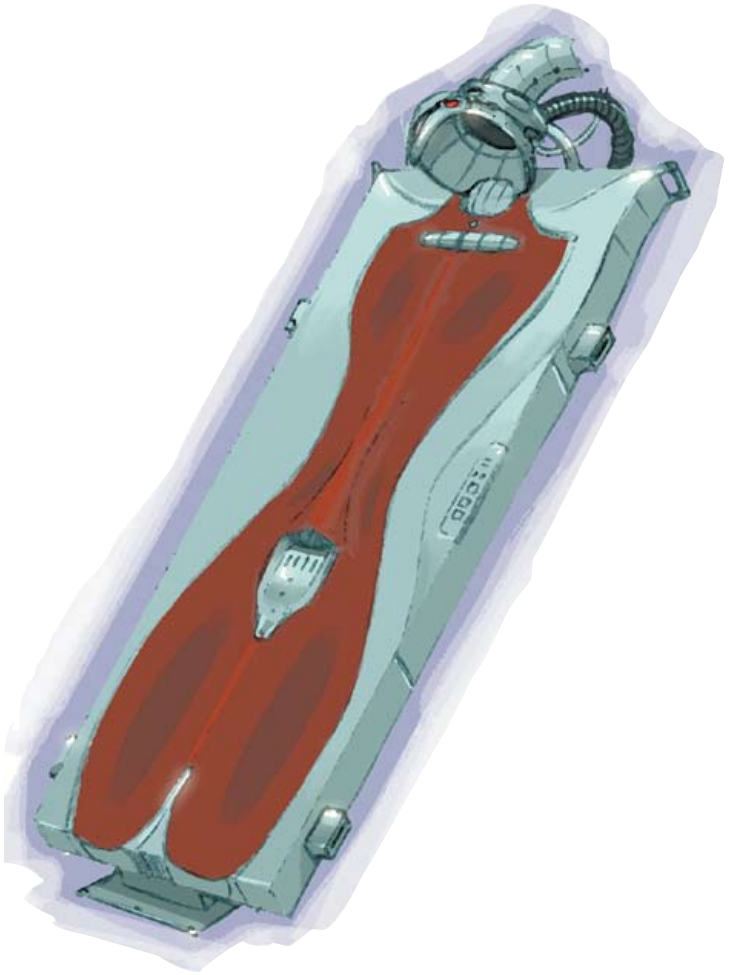
Imperial neurotechnology is a key weapon in the arsenal of Imperial Security. The most basic piece of Imperial neurotechnology, the agonizer, is in common use in Starfleet as a disciplinary tool, but the technology in the hands of Imperial Security is even more advanced, allowing IS agents to affect the minds of others in nearly any way imaginable, given enough time.

Concealed Agonizers

Imperial Security agents operating undercover or covertly outside the Empire often carry agonizers concealed as other devices: pieces of jewelry, small scanners, gloves, or other innocuous items. When necessary, the agent can apply an agonizer's lash to a target, a useful last-ditch weapon to provide an agent with an edge over an opponent. Concealed agonizers are also used to conduct interrogations in the field, although Klingons pride themselves on their ability to resist any level of pain.

Agonizer circuitry can also be built into chairs and manacles, used in Imperial Security interrogation facilities for the interrogation and control of prisoners. Agonizer bonds are generally set to activate if a prisoner moves a certain distance from a central transmitter, in order to prevent escape. They can also be triggered by remote control issued to the guards, allowing them to disable any prisoner with the touch of a button.

A concealed agonizer has the same general functionality as a normal agonizer (see page 48). Noticing an concealed agonizer requires an Observe test (TN 20); this gains a bonus if the character has specializations such as Interrogation or System Operations (Agonizer).



Mind-sifter

Specifications: 2 cubic meters; mass 1 ton (including control console)

Description: A mind-sifter uses neural scanning technology to "read" information from a subject's brain, scanning the brain cells for certain chemical links and translating them into usable information. Mind-sifter technology is based on a study of the telepathic abilities of Vulcans and Betazoids, but it is somewhat crude in comparison to the refinement and precision of a trained telepath. Still, it offers the advantage of being usable by any trained operator, and the information it displays is less subjective and more trustworthy than a telepath, so the device is in common use in Imperial Security.

A mind-sifter scan is uncomfortable at best, as the device's scanning beams stimulate neural impulses. Low-level scans cause discomfort and minor muscular twitches, so subjects are usually strapped down for a mind-sifter scan. At higher levels, scanning deeper into the cerebral cortex, a mind-sifter can gather more detailed information, but it begins to cause intense pain and permanent neural damage as brain cells are subjected to more intense scanning beams. A mind-sifter at its highest level becomes a mind-ripper, totally

destroying the subject's higher brain functions and reducing him to the level of a mental vegetable.

Rules: Operating a mind-sifter requires an Indoctrinate (Mind-Sifter) test (TN 15). The subject can resist this just like resisting a psionic attack (using the Willpower reaction and Mind Shield skill, if any). On a failure the operator only succeeds in knocking the subject unconscious; on a complete failure the subject loses 1d6 points of Intellect for the next week (successive complete failures cause the *permanent* loss of Intellect). On a success, the operator can force the subject to divulge one piece of information. A patient with the Mind Shield skill, who manages to force a draw, can screen his memories and give out only what information he desires, and does not suffer any Intellect loss from failures.

At mind-ripper levels a mind-sifter inflicts 1D6+7 points of damage to the subject each round, minus the subject's Willpower (plus Mind Shield skill, if any)—yes, subjects with a negative Willpower reaction suffer extra damage. Each wound level *permanently* reduces the subject's Intellect and Presence by 1 due to neurological damage. This also reduces the subject's resistance to further scans and neurological damage.

Neural Neutralizer

Specifications: 2 cubic meters; mass 1.5 tons (including control console)

Description: Developed by Dr. Simon Van Gelder based on mind-sifter technology, the neural neutralizer is capable of all the effects of a mind-sifter described above. In addition, the neural neutralizer can also edit the thoughts and memories of the subject, deleting or modifying certain memories and implanting entirely new ones. This makes the neural neutralizer a powerful tool for behavior modification and mind control.

A large padded chair or couch, equipped with restraints to hold the subject in place, contains the neutralizer mechanism. The neural scanning and output pods extend up from the chair to rest near either side of the subject's head. The process is most effective when the subject is conscious, since the lower levels of brainwave activity associated with sleep or unconsciousness are more difficult for the scanners to detect.

Imperial Security uses neural neutralizers to produce double agents through careful brainwashing. They also use behavior modification to produce "sleeper" agents, individuals with secret orders programmed into them that can be activated at a later time. This allows undercover IS agents to pass surface-level telepathic and mind-sifter scans without detection.

Rules: Use the rules for mind-sifters, above, for the neural neutralizer. Modifying a subject's memories or emotions instead counts as using the Empathy, Telepathy or Mind Control psionic skills—treat the operator as having 1 skill level (granted by the device). Add a bonus equal to the amount by which the operator made the initial Indoctrinate (Neural Neutralizer) test, halved if exerting the Mind Control skill. A psionic operator can use his own Empathy, Telepathy, or Mind Control skill instead and still add the bonus from the device. Again, the "patient" can use Willpower (with the Mind Shield skill) in an Opposed Test to resist the influence of the machine.

Telepathy

Although the Empire has mind-sifting technology, it has not yet replaced the abilities of trained and capable telepaths. Imperial Security often employs Vulcans and Betazoids as special investigators and interrogators capable of quickly getting at desired information. The Mind Meld and Telepathy psionic skills are used to get at a subject's memories and surface thoughts. Most telepathic interrogators prefer to begin with Telepathy. With the right line of questioning (usually accompanied by torture using an agonizer) the subject can be forced into consciously thinking of whatever information the interrogator wants. Subjects that manage to resist this process (and there are very few who do) are subjected to a mind meld to uncover the information.

Although telepathic interrogation is far more portable and efficient than a mind-sifter, telepaths are more than capable of lying about the information they find in a subject's mind. For this reason, telepathic scans are often conducted by more than one telepath, or verified using mind-sifter technology. IS telepaths understand this, and understand that the penalty for lying or otherwise abusing their position is death by agony booth, so they are usually as truthful and accurate as possible.

The Teacher

Specifications: 1m. diameter, 25 cm height; mass 4kg.

Description: Only a year after Captain Spock overthrew Kirk aboard the *I.S.S. Enterprise*, the Vulcan suffered a brief period of incapacity due to the thievery conducted by an unusual alien entity. Although the Vulcan's brain was gone, his crew went on to trace the thief to the Sigma Draconis system, and there forced the natives to use their advanced technologies to restore Spock's brain. (Captain Spock had wisely kept important blackmail and ship operations codes secret from his subordinates, and without his brain, the *Enterprise* crew would be unable to function.) After his brain was restored by one of the aliens, Spock ordered the removal of the "Teacher" unit that had given the knowledge of how to complete the brain-transplant operation, deeming it too dangerous for these aliens to retain such knowledge. Starfleet Security later obtained the device during the *Enterprise's* next spacedock, and though it proved to have limited applications, it was still useful for specific operations.

Because the *Enterprise* left the inhabitants of Sigma Draconis without power, their civilization rapidly crumbled. Much of the Teacher's data became inaccessible with its removal from the planet, but it still kept certain useful bits of knowledge in its residual memory banks.

The Teacher resembles a metal dome-shaped headpiece. Placed on the head of a humanoid, it can instill various forms of knowledge, but these only remain in the short-term memory and do not transfer to long-term experience in the same fashion as real-world experience. The process is also somewhat dangerous, as most humanoids have some level of incompatibility with the neurology of the Morgs and Eymorgs.

Rules: The Teacher-unit, placed on the head, allows the user to absorb specific knowledge. Typically, it can improve any one Academic skill at a time by adding a +4 bonus (because the Teacher has extraordinary knowledge, this is on top of any ranks the character may have, even beyond the normal 12 rank limit to skills). Even an untrained character benefits from this, becoming temporarily able to use the knowledge. However, this knowledge only lasts for approximately 2 hours. After that time, the bonus fades. Furthermore, each time a character uses the Teacher, the player must make a Willpower reaction test (TN 10, plus 1 for each prior usage). On a failure, the character takes 6d6 damage from neural overload.

Biotechnology

Opportunities for Humanoid experimentation have greatly expanded the bounds of Imperial biotechnology, currently one of the fastest growing fields of Imperial technology. Although genetic modification is looked on with a jaundiced eye (why create a genetic "superman" who is your superior and might replace you?), other forms of biotechnology are often employed as tools and weapons by Imperial Security. Many forms of biotech come from analysis of the biology of alien species or through studying the mistakes of species that wiped themselves out due to their own lack of understanding about the dangers of biotechnology.

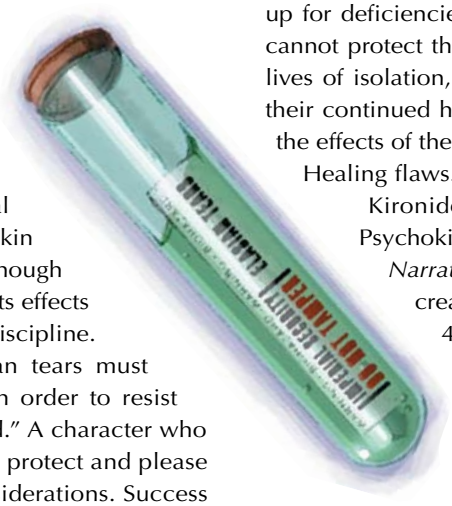
Deneva Parasites

The neural parasites of Deneva were ostensibly destroyed when Captain Kirk of the *I.S.S Enterprise* bombarded the planet, but Imperial Security has its ways of making sure that interesting specimens wind up in their labs. The Denevan parasites are difficult to control, because they survive simply by using pain induction in their hosts to force the host to do as they command—typically, so that they can reproduce themselves. Nevertheless, releasing a group of the parasites onto a humanoid colony can lead to chaos and panic, as the parasites spread themselves throughout the place and overtake the hapless settlers. Such terror tactics are well within the Empire's arsenal, and the fact that the parasites are easily killed by intense ultraviolet light—which usually isn't discovered soon enough by the victims—means that an infestation can easily be removed once the Empire is ready to move in and take over.

See *Star Trek: Creatures* pages 36-37 for specific information regarding Denevan neural parasites.

Elasian Tears

The tears of the women of the planet Elas contain a unique biochemical that stimulates intense feelings of love, affection, and protectiveness in men who are exposed to them. The biochemical can be reproduced synthetically, and Imperial Agents use "Elasian tears" as a tool for behavior modification and mind-control. When used separately from an Elasian woman, Imperial Security discovered the chemical created strong feelings of love and protectiveness in both males and females, usually attached to the first person they saw after exposure. The chemical is absorbed instantly through the skin and its effects are permanent, although some individuals are able to resist its effects through sheer willpower and self-discipline.



A character exposed to Elasian tears must make a Willpower test (TN 15) in order to resist the lure of his or her new "beloved." A character who fails the Willpower test must act to protect and please the loved one above all other considerations. Success on the Willpower test allows the character to act normally, although it does not cause the feelings to go away. A further exposure to the tears can cause someone to fixate on a new "beloved," but repeated exposure can cause neurological impairment and even insanity as the individual deals with an onslaught of conflicting emotions.

Type: Contact; **Onset:** One round; **Potency:** +8 TN (use Willpower instead of Stamina); **Treatment:** N/A; **Effect:** See text above; **Secondary Effect:** None; **Stages:** 0. So long as the character remains touching Elasian tears, he continues risking their effects.

Kironide Injections

Kironide is a chemical compound found in many of the plants on the planet Platonius. When sufficiently concentrated in the brain, kironide provides many Humanoid species (including Humans and Vulcans) with telekinetic abilities. The compound is absorbed naturally by eating native Platonian plants, but it requires years to build up a sufficient level of kironide in the body this way. Large doses of the refined compound can be injected directly into the bloodstream, having an effect in a matter of minutes.

While telekinesis is an extraordinarily useful ability, kironide has some serious drawbacks. The first is that direct injection of the compound (as opposed to building it up slowly over time) causes a shock to the body's systems, which try to purge the compound. The effects of a kironide injection last for anywhere from 2-7 hours (1D6+1 hours). When the effect wears off, the subject suffers 1D6 points of damage.

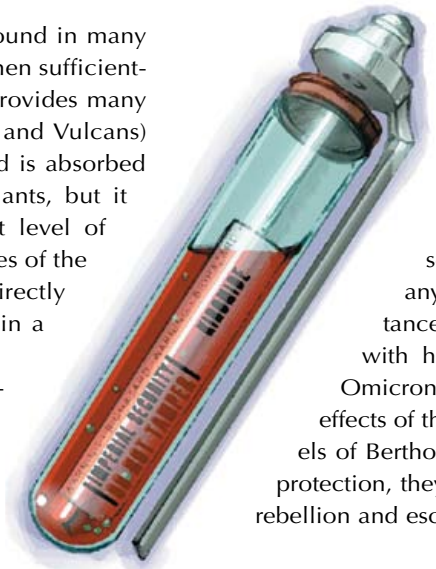
Regular use of kironide also causes erosion of the body's natural immune system. Kironide users lose virtually all immunity to disease and infections. Even the slightest cut or an otherwise harmless illness can kill them. Although modern medical treatment can make up for deficiencies in the subject's immune system, it cannot protect them entirely. Kironide users must live lives of isolation, surrounded by physicians to ensure their continued health. They automatically suffer from the effects of the Low Pain Threshold, Sickly and Slow Healing flaws.

Kironide telekinesis functions like the Psychokinesis skill (see the *Star Trek RPG Narrator's Guide*, page 219). Non-psionic creatures have an effective Psi rating of 4 when using kironite telekinesis and a skill of 1. Extended use can allow the subject to train and improve this skill.

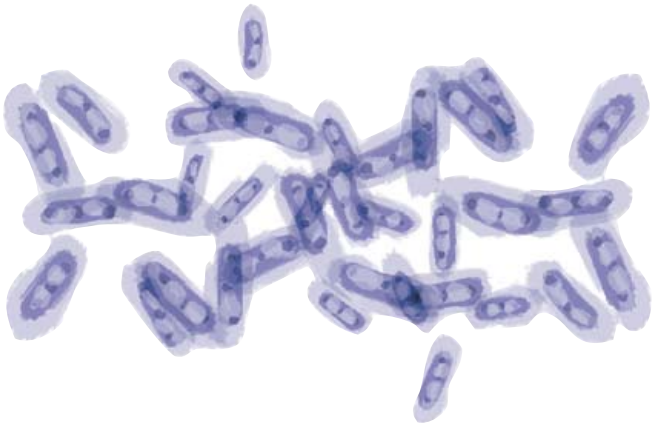
When injected as a medical agent, a dose of kironide sufficient to cause immediate telekinesis requires a TN 15 medical test to properly administer.

Pacifier Spores

Native to Omicron Ceti III, these symbiotic spores thrive on Berthold rays. They provide their hosts with complete health and contentment, but also induce a passive state wherein the host wants nothing but relaxation. Those affected by the spores are non-aggressive and calm, with little or no willpower. Extreme agitation and negative emotions from the host can kill the spores, but hosts never display these emotions on their own; such passions must be incited from an outside source. If a host is incited to rage or terror, make a Moderate (15) Willpower Test each round to shake off the effects of the spores.

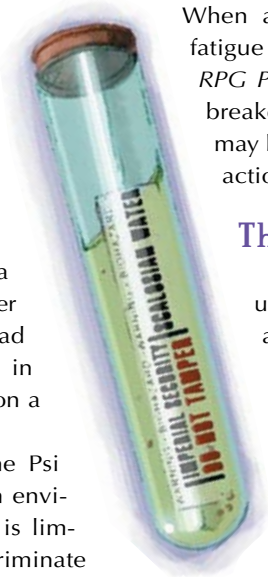


Imperial Security uses pacifier spores primarily to set up prison colonies without any concern for rebellion or resistance. Facilities are located on worlds with high levels of Berthold rays like Omicron Ceti III. Anyone overcoming the effects of the spores is exposed to lethal levels of Berthold radiation. Without the spores' protection, they quickly sicken and die, making rebellion and escape nearly impossible.



Psi 2000 Virus

First discovered on the dying planet Psi 2000, this virus is a complex hydrocarbon that forms only in areas of intensely fluctuating gravity. Capable of being absorbed through the skin, the virus acts on the brains of Humanoids like alcohol, causing intoxication and severely impairing judgment. A tiny dose of the virus is sufficient to cause infection; even skin-to-skin contact with an affected individual is sufficient to pass the virus on. Victims become so irrational and impaired that they engage in extremely dangerous activities with no concern for the consequences, like opening an emergency hatch or shutting down a containment force field "just for fun." Sooner or later, victims of the infection end up dead due to their own carelessness, especially in dangerous environments like a starship or on a hostile planet.



Imperial Security occasionally uses the Psi 2000 virus as a weapon, releasing it in an environment to contaminate it. Its usefulness is limited by the fact that the virus does not discriminate in its victims, and it is easily spread by casual contact. Its use is forbidden on planets where the virus might spread to other segments of the population. It is limited to ships, stations, and other isolated environments, which are destroyed or sterilized afterward. (See also the *Star Trek RPG Narrator's Guide*, page 224.)

Scalosian Water

An unusual form of radiation permeates the water of the planet Scalos. It causes an extreme state of hypermetabolic acceleration in Humanoids drinking it. The subject experiences each second as if it were an hour, moving too quickly to be detected by the unaided eye. Unfortunately, subjects suffer rapid biological burnout from the hyperacceleration, effectively aging to death in a matter of hours. Still, in that time a hyperaccelerated subject can do a significant amount of damage, able to move almost invisibly, and act faster than the eye can see. For all intents and purposes, the rest of the world appears frozen in time to a hyperaccelerated subject.

Since there is no known cure for the hyperacceleration, Imperial Security uses Scalosian water only for suicide missions. Agents are not informed of the water's true effects, and Imperial Security keeps the true nature of the technology secret.

Note that normal characters subjected to hyperacceleration have very short lifespans, as their cellular structure burns out due to the increased metabolism. The effect also makes hyperaccelerated victims highly vulnerable to injury. Should a hyperaccelerated character take damage for any reason, he must make a Stamina test to resist fatigue each action round from that point forward, so long as he remains hyperaccelerated. Each stage of fatigue incurred causes the character to appear to age by ten years, with all normal fatigue effects and continued tests to resist fatigue. When a character reaches the collapsed stage of fatigue (as per table A.8 on page 246 of the *Star Trek RPG Player's Guide*), the character dies of cellular breakdown. A low-Stamina or unlucky character may be reduced from perfect health to death in six action rounds by this process.

The Venus Drug

The so-called "Venus drug" serves to make users more physically attractive and sexually appealing. It is not physically addictive, but users become psychologically addicted to the beauty and influence it grants. A single dose lasts a few hours (roll 1D6) and grants the user the Confident edge for the duration, as well as a +1 bonus to all social interaction tests involving seduction. When the drug wears off, the subject is at -1 die on all Presence Tests for at least an hour. Imperial Security sometimes gives the Venus drug to agents intended to seduce a particular target.

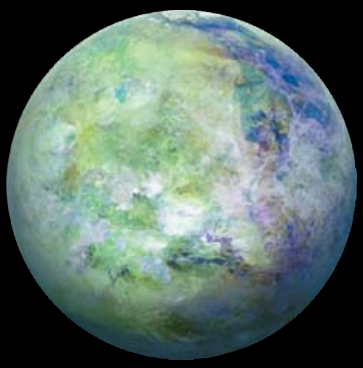
WORLDS OF THE EMPIRE

What good is an Empire without conquered worlds? Whether you're a fast-rising Human officer stationed to a faraway planet, or an alien struggling to carve a niche for yourself in a universe stacked against you, you'll need the following intelligence on the Empire's most dangerous and interesting planets.

ALPHA CENTAURI

Alpha Centauri lies in ruins, a testament to the efficiency of the Empire's earliest colonial administrators. Once a world that reeked with delicate and sinister beauty, Alpha Centauri's most prominent current feature is rubble. Thistles, vines, stinkweeds, and stranglethorns poke up through the cracks in what were once streets, laneways, and promenades. Its vast, depopulated megacities house rats, needleworms, jabadillos, and a host of other swarming, disease-ridden vermin. Roving gangs of radiation-crazed scavengers, the last, desperate remnants of Centauran society, comb the rubble for things to eat. Sometimes they find the odd treasure of Alpha Centauri's artistic past. They fight one another for the privilege of taking it to one of the few remaining colonial administrators. He'll give them a few cans of surplus rations for it, then sell it for thousands of credits.

The Empire conquered the planet in 2074. Over the next several decades, Humans and Vulcans joined together to strip the planet of anything vaguely valuable. This included the majority of the population, who were enslaved en masse. Their descendants still make up the biggest pool of slaves in the Empire's auction houses. Enslaved Centaurans have been completely deculturated; they know little of their heritage and are resigned to their life of servitude.



Today, Alpha Centauri's main use to the Empire is as a gigantic waste facility. Starfleet and various corporations use it as a dumping ground for radioactive waste and a range of toxic chemical by-products. Most of the several hundred thousand free Centaurans still at large on the planet suffer severe psychoses brought on by exposure to these pollutants. Some are mutating. Personnel at a Terran research base study the mutants in case any of them sprout anything really cool, like tentacles or third eyes.

A few Centaurans fled the invasion on hijacked Terran vessels. Their descendants now wander the quadrant as stateless aliens. A few became notorious pirates. The most infamous Centauran pirate is Gan Leikan, who uses captured Terrans as subjects of her classically-inspired art-murder performances. Thus she keeps the proud heritage of her vanquished people alive.

ANDORIA

Andoria is a frozen world orbiting a white subgiant deeply coreward from the heart of the empire. Ruled by a royal family descended from an ancient conqueror, the Andorians are passionate and artistic, but their favorite art is war. Personal squabbles are ultimately settled with blood in public duels, where the stink of death and alcohol mingle with screams and hearty laughter. Lusty warriors all, the Andorian rulers maintain the fabric of their society by constantly engaging in warfare, the pursuit that brings all Andorians together as brothers, and dutiful servants of the Emperor.

Of all the vassal worlds, Andoria is the most openly-worshipful of Humanity (or at least, the most notably sincere about it). In Andoria's cities and villages, every street is decked in imperial regalia, and the Andorian fleet is one of the deadliest tools in the war machine of the empire. After a resistant new alien world tastes the chaotic fury of the Axanari forward attack, the disciplined waves of death that follow frequently do so at the hands of Andorian warriors. The Emperor values the passionate aliens, and these masters of the art of combat love their role in the Empire's growth.

It was not always so. The Andorians of centuries past vainly named themselves the Andorian Star Empire, a military state forged centuries before they had even achieved space travel. All that is Andorian was built in the name of Krotus, their legendary conqueror, who brought all the disparate cultures of the frozen world under his iron rule sometime in the 13th century.

Determined to carry the legacy of Krotus to the stars, the Andorians built a dozen thriving colonies, and enslaved the primitive natives of nearby Menk II, before encountering Humanity in 2137. The resulting war, fueled by Andorian certainty that they were destined to rule the Galaxy, was a costly exercise for the Emperor, as the powerful Andorian ships repelled wave after wave of Imperial assault. Ultimately, the Andorians were simply out-numbered and short on the resources necessary for extended warfare, and they found themselves in a humiliating war of attrition. Worn down to nothing, the proud blue warriors admitted defeat, their morale crushed and their cities starving.

For decades, the Andorians were grudgingly servile, but a younger generation fanned the embers of the spirit nearly extinguished by the war. In 2186, during a time of Imperial instability, the Endilev clan led a bloody uprising in a desperate bid for Andorian independence. Striking coup after coup using little more than scavenged ships, antique weapons and the clan's signature form of drunken-style hand fighting, their early success was shocking. In the end, however, they were still no match for the empire. Louvin rallied the forces needed to do the job, and their utter defeat at his hands was turned into an instrument in his own bid for the throne.

What developed next surprised even Louvin. The Andorians couldn't survive the shame of a second crushing defeat, so they refused to indulge in shame at all. A religious and philosophical renaissance resulted in the fusion of the popular Terionist religion with the teachings of the latter-day prophetess Umarin. The new faith made loyal citizens of the Andorians, who, *en masse* and over the course of only a few years, embraced the belief that the Human emperor was the reincarnated embodiment of Krotus. They repented, feeling that they had been foolish to deny their destiny by fighting the ruler that they should have been serving all along!

Louvin, amused, put this new development to use when dealing with the newly-discovered Klingons in 2218. Offering the Klingons the role of favored slaves and guards galled the proud Andorians seriously. When it became necessary to extinguish the Klingons once and for all, the Andorians were the most eagerly aggressive attackers, swearing their lives to Starfleet for the first time in history, and slaughtering fourteen Klingons for every Andorian lost. They were determined that *they* would be the favored warriors, not the upstart Klingons! Louvin, smart enough to reward and cultivate Andorian passion, but hardly willing to keep them literally at his side, elevated Andoria to vassal status. There they serve still, confident in the knowledge that they are the instruments of their ancient conqueror.

ANDORIAN LITERATURE: AN EXCERPT

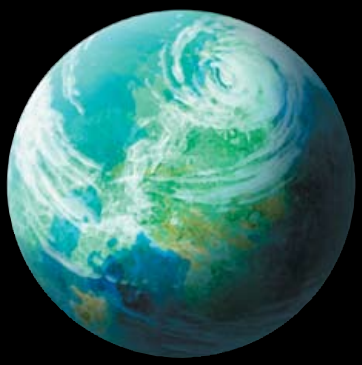
Shieri turned Ghalev's corpse with her foot to look at his frozen expression of shock. She grinned wickedly. "Falin, we were brilliant. To think the little fool trusted us."

Falin held her close, thrilled at her attention, the warm satisfaction of the kill. "He could have trusted us, if he'd only turned his talents to the Emperor's service. His pride was wasted, misplaced." He stared down, feeling a little sad for his former comrade.

He spoke as much to the cooling body as to Shieri. "We are Andorians, the dagger of Imperial will."

Shieri kissed Falin softly. "The Senator will be so pleased, my love."

— Douglas Bell, Falin: a Novel of Andoria, *2253*



BAJOR

In 2255, when vessels of the Imperial Starfleet first reached the region the Empire would eventually christen Bajor Sector, they encountered several unique species. Two of them would play prominent roles in the future history of the Empire. The first of these new species—the Bajorans—dwelt on the seventh planet orbiting the star Bajor-B'hava'el.

At that time, the Bajorans existed as an aggressive, passionate species of farmers and craftsmen. Their civilization had subsisted basically unchanged for centuries, the spirited chronicle of Bajoran history stretching back twenty thousand years. While the Bajorans did possess advanced energy weapons and warp capability, their space fleet and organized military remained much smaller than those of the Imperial Starfleet. In short, they were ripe for Imperial conquest.

After assessing the situation covertly, the first Imperial exploratory vessel sent a subspace transmission to Imperial Starfleet Command. In response, a fleet of warships commanded by Admiral Gorek of Andoria arrived to take possession of the planet Bajor. The steadfast Bajorans greeted the admiral's arrival, and the accompanying show of Imperial might, with outrage and refusal. The stubborn Bajorans refused to capitulate even after a minor planetary bombardment rendered one area of the planet—now known as the "Bajoran outback"—uninhabitable by Humanoid species.

The Bajorans fought back, but their efforts met insurmountable resistance. Within a week the Imperial warships had demolished the Bajoran "fleet" and taken possession of the planet. Imperial forces rounded up and disintegrated all Bajorans who fought against the Imperial forces, or who had publicly opposed Imperial rule in any way. In all, over 125 million Bajorans were killed during the conquest.

The Empire soon found that it had taken a rich prize indeed. Bajor was a paradise, a lush planet with a wealth of mineral assets, including uridium and plenty of people to mine it. The conquerors quickly installed a colonial government, headed by Elthur of Vulcan. Emperor Garth issued a clear and concise edict to the new governor—squeeze as much wealth out of Bajor as possible.

Seeing the population more as beasts of burden than individuals, Elthur established a series of labor camps in key mining areas and brought in advanced Imperial mining technology to crack open the planet and extract its minerals. Over the next 40 years, tens of millions of Bajorans met their deaths in the labor camps, executed for crimes ranging from insubordination to resistance activities; others succumbed to the many epidemics that the Empire permitted to rage unchecked among them. Gallitep quickly gained a reputation as the worst of the labor camps; "disciplinary cases" and other agitators arrived here to face their final punishments. Forced to work in the most dangerous jobs, and subject to the harshest of punishments for even minor rules infractions, Gallitep's inmates experienced the worst oppression and degradation the Empire could devise.

Because Bajor's atmosphere and environment closely resembled those of Earth, the Empire forcibly relocated millions of Bajorans to make room for Human colonists. Faithful Imperial officers were rewarded with homes on Bajor, where Bajoran servants catered to their desires and made their lives truly enjoyable. The world's most picturesque regions saw the establishment of vacation resorts for Imperial officials, with average Bajorans forbidden to enter those regions except as workers.

The Bajorans did not suffer such misery quietly, of course. An aggressive, often fierce people, they fought back whenever possible. After the conquest of their planet was complete, they immediately established an underground resistance movement. Using weapons and equipment smuggled to them by other Bajorans or purchased on the galactic black market, members of the resistance waged a lonely war to free their planet from Imperial domination. They sabotaged mining equipment, damaged and destroyed the homes of Imperial citizens (and even, in one daring 2283 assault, vandalized the Governor's Palace itself), detonated bombs in areas frequented by Imperials, and conducted raids on labor camps to free prisoners.

At first, Governor Elthur (and, later, his successors) considered the resistance little more than a ragtag group of guerrillas who would soon be captured and executed. However, as the years passed and the resistance grew and became more daring, Imperial officials realized they could no longer ignore the problem. In 2286, in an effort to provide an example and cow the rest of the rebels, Imperial soldiers executed 42 resistance fighters captured in the Kendra Valley. Far from having the desired effect, the "Kendra Valley massacre" only further enflamed the Bajorans; it gave the resistance its first true martyrs.

BETAZED

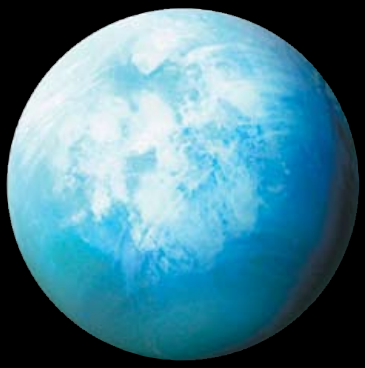
Mind-reading abilities make the maintenance of a police state a simple matter. Accordingly, the vassal state of Betazed boasts the Empire's most repressive government. Betazoids want a government capable of maintaining control. These empaths and mind-readers desperately fear one another; any strong telepath possesses the ability to steal thoughts from weaker minds, or even turn enemies into brain-dead vegetables. Every Betazoid grows up learning to shield her mind from the attacks of others—and how to effectively make those attacks herself. Thus the people with the strongest minds come to rule others, just as the physically strong tend to rise to the top of other societies. The state Security apparatus monitors the thoughts of others, to identify possible henchmen, and to destroy minds mighty enough to challenge the current regime. Betazed's Supreme Leader, Loshana Kwol, creeps into the dreams of her subjects at night, using a secret device to broadcast her psychic presence to billions of sleeping minds. In these synthetic nightmares, she cows the timid, seduces the handsome, and tortures those who would resist her indomitable will.

Betazed was conquered once before, during its early days of space flight. A neighboring people called the Terabian feared their telepathy and herded them into concentration camps. The Betazoids used their mind-control powers to slowly subvert the intentions of their captors, eventually provoking them into mass suicide. They did the same to certain Terran commanders after the Imperial conquest of their home world in 2230. Their psychic resistance series scored early successes, leading to the spectacular deaths of several Terran administrators and their lackeys. But the Betazoids had yet to fully confront the interminable tenacity of the Human spirit. Starfleet captain Jack Beatty developed a simple method of mental discipline to protect himself from the mental attacks projected at him by then-Supreme Leader Giliana Houn. He exposed her invading mind to the full violence and perversity of Human consciousness; she suffered a devastating series of strokes and died on the spot. Starfleet Academy teaches the Beatty Method to selected personnel, including civilian administrators headed for Betazed. Only about a quarter of Terrans on the planet know the method. That's a big enough percentage to keep the Betazoids from probing into Human minds. They possess no reliable way of telling those who know the Beatty Method from those who don't.

Once resigned to their conquered state, Betazoids worked hard to elevate their status within the Empire. By offering their thought-invading services to Starfleet and Imperial Security, they sought to switch their classification from subject to vassal world. Beatty Method or no, Humans remained wary of the eerie Betazoids, withholding their promotion for nearly fifty years. They became vassals in 2278. Their Senator took her seat only after all of her Terran soon-to-be colleagues passed their Beatty Method courses.

Betazoid society is fiercely matriarchal. Women command households, occupy the top spots in any organization, and demand sexual favors from men. Men shrink from the wrath of their mothers and wives, perform menial duties, and meekly accede to the advances of predatory females. Betazoids perform their orgiastic wedding ceremonies in the nude, drenched in the blood of freshly-slaughtered animals, because marriage is a battleground in which the woman must continually renew her conquest over the man.

Betazoids make a point of cruel honesty. They use gift boxes with talking faces to issue challenges to one another, or to gloat when they deal setbacks to rivals. They venerate the memory of Khrysara, the ancient man so mighty he became a woman. She forged the Stygian Rings of Betazed, a legendary artifact said to possess the power to immolate the seven worst foes of the Supreme Leader. Like her predecessors, Loshana Kwol employs teams of archaeologists to comb the planet's ruins for these lost items of power.



BOLARUS IX

The blue-skinned, ridge-skulled Humanoids of Bolarus IX have spent their entire history locked in warfare with one another. The first Bolian clans battled for hunting territory. When they discovered herding and horticulture, they raided one another for food. When food was abundant, they raided for vengeance. They'd no sooner discovered the secrets of long-distance ocean travel when they began building naval fleets to battle for command of the sea lanes. Strong men established walled cities to control farmland and tax shipping; then the cities went to war. Cities conquered one another or banded together into nation states. By now you can guess what those nation states did.

By the time of the conquest in 2246, the warring Bolian states had consolidated themselves into three major superpowers, each occupying a large continent. Although an outsider sees virtually no difference between the cultures of the Bol'se, Bol'ki, and Bol'ra nations, the Bolians themselves regard each as unalterably incompatible with the others. A Bolsean would sooner die than occupy close quarters with a Bolkian or Bolran. Bolkian children grow up learning that all Bolseans and Bolrans are mindlessly impulsive creatures fit only for a prison camp. Bolrans believe that Bolseans and Bolkians smell bad, eat repulsively, and are invariably the products of multi-generational inbreeding. No amount of actual contact between these nearly identical cultures serves to teach the Bolians anything. They'd sooner stick to their ancient prejudices than confront the evidence of their own senses.

When conquered, the Bolians had nearly recovered from their fourth world war, the second to be fought with nuclear and biogenic weapons. Their ascent from the ashes of World War Four took seven centuries, during which the three nations developed ingenious (but mutually incompatible) technologies to reclaim irradiated territory, combat mutagenic plagues, and restore damage to the planet's protective atmospheric layers. During that period, naturally, they engaged in cold wars of diplomatic rhetoric, closed borders, and low-scale terrorism.

When the Starfleet invasion force arrived, led by Robert April and his *I.S.S. Enterprise*, Presidents of the Bolsean, Bolkian, and Bolran nations all offered to ally with the Empire to help destroy the other two. April told all three they were on his team, got his fleet into perfect position, and betrayed them all, destroying an impressive 97% of the Bolian fleet. Occupying forces arrived not long after, and have remained in place ever since. Knowing a good thing when they saw one, colonial administrators left the shells of the three national governments in place, after stripping them of all but ceremonial powers.

Today's Bolarus is a pitiful subject state. Imperial administrators harvest it for resources, enslaving Bolians of all three nations. Remarkably, most Bolians direct their resentment not at the Empire, but toward their rival nations. Each nation excoriates the other two as craven collaborators. All three governmental delegations toady relentlessly to local administrators, and to the Empire, hoping to usurp the favored status they believe one of their rivals currently enjoys. The Bureau doesn't have to work hard to inculcate this delusion in the Bolians. If anything, they find the constant entreaties of the three delegations tedious.

Conspirators favor Bolians as patsies because they can be persuaded to do almost anything in the name of national pride. Bolians are so methodical they seem obsessive. Their scientists and engineers, many of them privileged slaves, excel in rehabilitating places ruined by warfare. Their advances in anti-radiation technologies and biogenic rehabilitation outdo those of any other culture. Bolians of the same nation work together splendidly, beginning to think and act as one after a short time together. Throw one of another nation into the team, and they'll turn on him like hyenas on a wounded antelope.

A few Bolians recognize that the presence of the Empire renders their old nationalism absurdly outdated. The Bolian Resistance, supposedly led by the shadowy Darthalo the Knife, distributes propaganda exhorting Bolians to come together as one nation, throw off their oppressors, and conquer the Galaxy themselves. They murder Terrans, sabotage their installations, and mount a counter-counter-terrorism campaign against Starfleet intelligence. Darthalo's resistance fighters hire out as mercenaries and smugglers to fund their operations. Mostly, though, they kidnap or assassinate Bolian officials of the puppet government, singling them out as traitors to the true, united nation of Bolarus.

FERENGINAR

Throughout the Galaxy, people fear the mercenary acumen of the sharp-toothed and rapacious Ferengi people. Observers whisper that the leaders of this rain-soaked, resource-poor world, especially the prodigiously well-lobed Grand Nagus Azark, operate much more independently than vassals ought to. The Empire's various Security arms suspect Azark of numerous betrayals of Imperial interests, but can prove nothing. Surely, though, all of those mysterious agent deaths can't be a coincidence.

The Ferengi have always combined the science of war with the art of finance. As their first Rule of Acquisition states, "Money is the only thing worth killing for." The dozens of trade wars that raged across the mushy soil of Ferenginar before its discovery of space flight hardened them into a tough people who'd sooner suffer enormous pain than back down from a property dispute. When they saw the limitless opportunities for profit in space, they stopped fighting one another and got to work as merchants, spies, assassins, smugglers, arms dealers and other practitioners of legitimate commerce. Coining a new law of acquisition—"Middlemen outlive kings"—their then-Grand Nagus Olrak marketed a series of business tomes teaching Ferengi how to survive in a hostile universe. They would avoid direct conquest, instead putting themselves at the service of whichever power happened to currently hold sway in any given sector. Olrak taught that kings always need cash to supply their armies and buy the fealty of supporters. So long as the Ferengi could convincingly promise any leader that he'd get more money over the long term by peacefully cooperating with them, they'd forever occupy a fun and lucrative market niche.

And in 2250, when a Ferengi vessel "salvaging" communications equipment from an unmanned Imperial starbase made first contact with Starfleet, that's just what they did. Mustering his entire supply of that famous Ferengi charm and suavity, the captain of the vessel, a man named Azark, convinced his intercepting Starfleet counterpart to stand down. Azark promised to not only pay reparations and punitive damages for his inadvertent property crime, but to lead the captain and his favorite officers to the biggest finder's fee the Galaxy had ever known. By the time the "captive" had been borne to Imperial headquarters, he'd won the life savings of the senior staff three times over—each time returning his winnings to them as a gesture of interspecies goodwill. Before the Emperor, he unveiled a scheme to take Ferenginar for the Empire without its having to fire a shot. Naturally, for his role in planning and executing the coup, he'd expect a few small favors in return. He would become the new Grand Nagus; they'd designate Ferenginar a vassal planet, not a subject. Emperor Louvin readily agreed.

The coup, run by Azark and assisted by Starfleet Intelligence, went off without a hitch. Excited both by the ease of the operation and the generous secret commissions Azark doled out to them, Imperial officers failed to note that the current Nagus escaped execution and was nowhere to be seen. Nor did they spot the rapidly-removed portraits of the old Nagus, which depicted a man bearing at least a strong family resemblance to Azark—if not Azark himself. Did Azark arrange to replace himself as Nagus? The Ferengi claim otherwise, despite mounting evidence.

Azark quickly neutralized any inclination Emperor Louvin might have had to further investigate the matter. He funneled much-needed ludugial gold both into the Imperial coffers and into Louvin's own accounts. When Garth took over, Azark's representatives rushed to the scene to make a similar deal. Garth's Senatorial assassins had Azark on board before Garth's body was even cold.

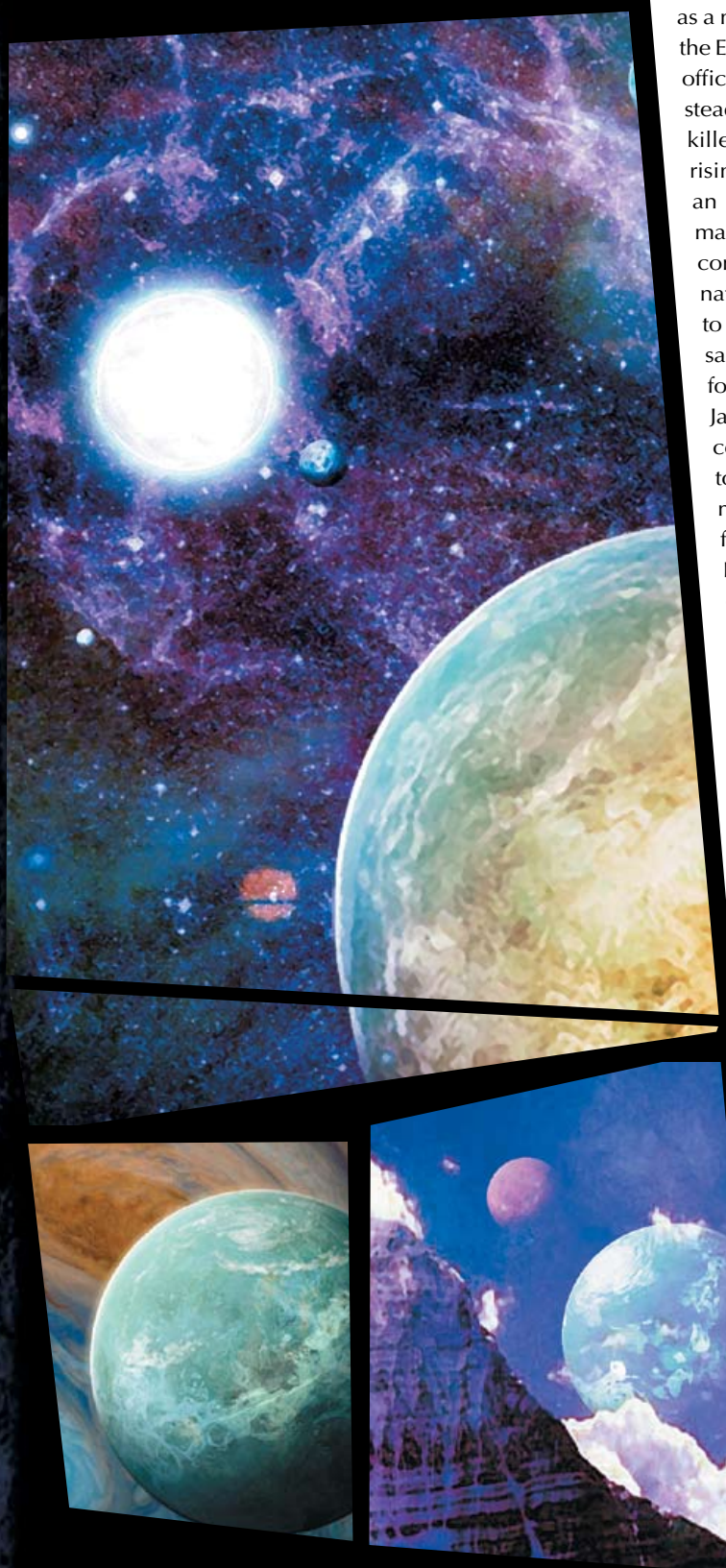
The Ferengi maintain their unique degree of autonomy because it is their business sense, not the inherent resources of their world, which enriches their Imperial patrons. Only Ferengi free to exercise their judgment can generate the kind of revenues Emperors now depend on for ongoing economic stability. While many Security officials remain suspicious of them, Emperors love Ferengi. Career-minded secret police know better than to target the Emperor's favorites.

Lowlier schemers fear the Ferengi almost as much as the Vulcans: they're nearly as sneaky as the pointy-eared logicians and infinitely more charismatic. Legend portrays a cadre of Ferengi assassins so skilled at infiltration, camouflage, and silent assassination as to be virtually invisible. They supposedly use secret technologies to evade electronic surveillance. These so-called *zakrim* number among the foremost practitioners of the Ferengi martial art of *pek*. *Pek* relies on the Ferengis' remarkable auditory and mathematical capabilities. Fighters predict their opponent's moves by listening to the air they displace, and triangulating accordingly.

Since their vassalage, Ferengi entrepreneurs have successfully taken over some of the Galaxy's largest slave-trading, gambling, and munitions concerns. Azark denounces criminal activity of any sort, but clearly accepts donations from crooks. Although Ferengi often clash with the Orion Syndicate, they're muscling in on territory, not stamping out crime.

THE RIGEL SYSTEM

The star called Rigel (sometimes called Beta Orionis) boasts more inhabitable planets than any other in the Empire. Although three separate races call it home, Terran colonists now outnumber all three of them combined.



Inhabited Planets

The balmy Rigel II, called "the Pleasure Planet", houses estates owned by the Imperial elite. Its circuses, casinos, and joy domes provide the most fashionable forms of recreation to the privileged few. While 50,000 or so of its original inhabitants work here as servants or slaves, most were forcibly relocated in 2180, when it was declared an Imperial preserve.

The heavily-populated Rigel III serves the Empire as a manufacturing and transshipment point. Many of the Empire's biggest corporations maintain big branch offices here. The planet's heavy industries demand a steady supply of off-world labor to replace workers killed in frequent industrial accidents. One of the rising stars of the Bureau of Interstellar Hegemony, an administrator named John Hengist, brilliantly manages its complex economy. After investigators connected him to a series of shallow graves in a national park near Rigel III's capital, he confessed to history's most infamous murders. He was, he said, possessed by an immortal entity responsible for the killing sprees of Redjac, Beratis, Kesla, and Jack the Ripper. A fascinated public made him a celebrity. The Emperor granted him a rare license to kill. Reviewers praised his recently-published memoirs as an inspirational manual destined for classic status. Tight security now surrounds Hengist, to keep groupies away from him. He complains they make his job too difficult and his hobby too easy.

Rigel V, once the jewel of the system, was evacuated two years ago when an experimental variety of artificial blood developed sentience, mobility, and a predatory appetite. Selected residents only had a few hours' notice before being beamed to Rigel III by a chain of ships operating a transporter relay system. They left most of their valuables behind. Heavily-armed extraction teams, often funded by Ferengi salvage agencies, periodically beam down to loot the planet's empty cities. These tense operations test even the bravest man's mettle; the blood beasts, capable of sensing the bio-readings of living beings, converge on intruders within minutes. Fast-moving, capable of changing shape or turning into a corrosive liquid, and immune to phaser blasts or even old-fashioned gunfire, the blood beasts often claim a team member or two before the mission gets scrubbed. (Like the Rigelian blood used as the basis for the experiment, the creatures are green.)

The Kaylar, a race of primitive hunter-gatherers, called Rigel VII home until 2254, when a fight broke out between Kaylar warriors and crew members of the *I.S.S. Enterprise*, commanded by Christopher Pike. In retaliation, Pike bombarded the surface, destroying many Kaylar camps and religious sites. Over the intervening years, slave traders captured about ninety percent of the Kaylar population. Kaylar slaves became fashionable in aristocratic Terran circles; their culture reminded buyers of noble savages from Earth's ancient past. Kaylar men serve as ceremonial guards; women, as pleasure slaves. A marginal group of Kaylar still hide in the deep forests of Rigel VII. Terran colonists moved in to take over this verdant planet, setting up industries to rival those of Rigel III. Displaced residents of Rigel V were relocated to Rigel VII two years ago. The Empire still hasn't made the necessary infrastructure adjustments to accommodate an additional two billion people. Colonists must resort to bribery, sneak thievery or hijacking just to secure adequate housing, food, and potable water. Even government administrators find themselves engaging in various scams to provide their families with the necessities of life. Awful living conditions embolden ordinary people to speak out against the regime. Local leaders, stuck in the same boat with them, turn a blind eye to their sedition. Imperial Security teams sent to crack down on dissent scarcely know where to begin. Although it would be cheaper for the Empire simply to supply Rigel VII with the resources it needs, hardliners back home refuse to do anything that might be construed as giving in to malcontents. Imperial Security launches periodic but half-hearted attempts to crack down, fearing planetwide riots of they push too hard. Meanwhile, troublemakers and dissidents from other corners of the Empire have heard that they'll enjoy near-total freedom to operate if they relocate to Rigel VII. Fugitives and traitors hide out on the planet, relying on a sympathetic populace to protect them. Its lawlessness also provides cover for the Orion Cabal, a criminal cult described in more detail below.

Powerful storms scourge the surface of the barely habitable Rigel XII. A few hundred miners extract lithium from rich mineral veins beneath the planet's surface. Although lithium is no longer used in warp engines, Imperial scientists still use it to power many of their experimental devices. Several research bases cluster around the mines in order to access large quantities of comparatively inexpensive lithium. Science Ministry Security teams protect and monitor the researchers. The biggest base belongs jointly to the Ministry and Keeler Aerospace. Rumor has it that they're working on a so-called "super weapon" or "planet smasher." The Science Police recently apprehended a trio of surgically-altered Romulan agents attempting to infiltrate the mining camp; no doubt they were trying to gather intelligence on this top-secret project. The Cardassian government offers a reward equalling about half a billion credits in exchange for the planet smasher's full schematics.

The Orions

Orion origins remain murky. They claim to come from Rigel VII, but the Kaylar evolved there, and it's rare for two sentient species to develop on the same planet. They might come from Rigel II, the now-uninhabitable Rigel VIII, or any of half a dozen worlds in the Orion constellation. Orions like to cultivate an air of mystery about themselves.

Orions are Humanoid; many of them have green skin. An Orion sub-caste displays animalistic traits: they're larger, more hirsute, less intelligent, and more perceptive than the norm. These traits may appear on a recessive gene; two normal Orions can sire an animalistic child. Although Orions seem to mistreat and abuse their savage kin, they claim to view the birth of a wild child as a sign that they enjoy the favor of their dread deity, which they refer to only as Q.

The Orion Cabal: About ten per cent of Orions seem to actively and enthusiastically worship Q; this group is known as the Orion Cabal. As a show of devo-

tion to their hungry, chaotic deity, the Cabal engages in criminal activity ranging from unlicensed prostitution to Human sacrifice. Their priests have no objection to cabal members making a living. They even broker worshippers' services as assassins, burglars, kidnappers, and smugglers. However, cabalists also commit outrageous acts of sabotage and terrorism for religious reasons. They believe that their god wants them to add to the world's supply of suffering, confusion, and fear.

Orion legend has it that Q once walked among men in the universe we know. This formless entity set out to conquer Humankind, as it had done with so many other races. But the treacherous Humans found a secret—perhaps a god-like ally, or maybe an ancient incantation—which they used to banish Q to an extra-dimensional prison. Now he is able to communicate only to his chosen people, the Orions, and even then only through certain ancient religious ceremonies. Robed and hooded Orion priests gather together to preside over obscene rites, sacrificing to Q at least one of his favored animalistic children. For a few short minutes, the luckiest worshippers feel the direct presence of his ineffable evil. They hear him giving them orders. They feel his power coursing through their bodies, granting them powers incomprehensible to science.

With these allegedly supernatural powers, high-caste Orions more than rival the Ferengi *zakrim* as terrifying killers. If you believe the stories, the Assassins of Q can turn invisible, walk through walls, dodge phaser fire, and survive unprotected in the vacuum of space. Although popular imagination portrays them as robed, chanting, green-skinned zealots stinking of brimstone and incense, truly effective assassins don't go around blatantly advertising their sinister intentions. That cowed-looking slave, bored maintenance worker, or pustule-covered beggar might well be a disguised Assassin of Q.

Not all members of the Orion Cabal are of Orion origin. The sect does, however, screen out Terrans. Vulcans, Betazoids, and Andorians, so races closely aligned with the Terrans find it nearly impossible to join. The greater your species' grievance against the Empire, the more likely you are to be accepted.

Imperial Security treats the Orion Cabal as a major threat. In a way, they'd have an easier job if more Orions belonged to it. Then they could just detain every Orion in sight. They may still do this if they get desperate enough, but for the moment they're sticking to the more cost-effective strategy of arresting and killing only bona fide cabal members. Even so, they figure they eliminate three innocent or peripherally involved Orions for every actual high-level worshipper they nab. At the same time, the Cabal has proven itself adept at sniffing out undercover Security agents. If they can safely do so, they spirit captured agents away for interrogation and eventual feeding to their

Otherwise, they murder the agent, leaving behind a horribly mutilated corpse.

Cabal operations extend throughout the Galaxy, past the Empire's borders. The Cabal's ultimate goal is to release Q from his dimensional shackles. Q will then ravage the known Galaxy, concentrating his wrath on Humankind. He will remake the very laws of physics, changing his loyal worshippers into beings like himself. Together, they will rule a shattered reality.

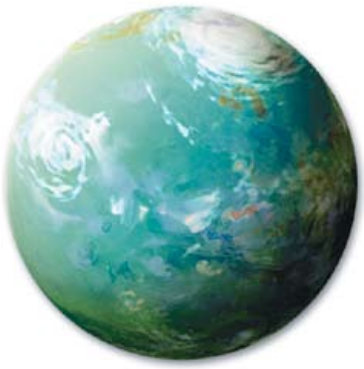
The Procurer's Guild: Female Orions of the animalistic persuasion are the most coveted pleasure slaves in the Galaxy. You can't just take a wild green woman and expect her to live up to the legend. An extensive and esoteric training program is required to teach her not only the arts of love, but the restraint required not to kill or injure her clientele. A cadre of Orion procurers jealously keeps the secrets of the training regimen, preventing others from muscling in on their lucrative vocation. The Procurers' Guild denies any connections to the Orion Cabal, but anyone looking at the right intelligence files can see that the two organizations do frequent business together.

Senatorial interference protects the guild from a serious investigation. Orion slave girls are not only status symbols, but exert an almost addictive influence on men who spend too much time in their proximity. Several months ago, one zealous Security officer was enslaved by order of the Senate after he got too close to Procurer's Guild's secrets and refused to whitewash his report. Now he's scraping Bolrean barnacles off ship hulls on Bolarus IX.

Subtler minds have suggested a second reason behind the protection enjoyed by the guild; Senators use procurers as go-betweens to hire Assassins of Q. When they need someone killed right away, they find it easy to forget that they're enriching the Empire's enemies.

If anything, many Senators' chief grievance against the guild revolves around a question of authenticity. Guild members have been known to take normal Orion females and subject them to a genetic alteration process allowing them to mimic the animal women. Although these counterfeits look just like the real thing, and even exude the narcotic pheromones of true animal women, not all of them can successfully simulate the necessary fervor in the bedchamber. The guild denies that counterfeits even exist, but issues quiet refunds if prodded hard enough.

Ordinary Orions: Although most Orions enjoy seeing their compatriots striking fear into the hearts of arrogant Humans, they're otherwise uninvolved in the cabal. Some, motivated solely by greed, might aid them in their illegal enterprises, or act as independent criminals. The vast majority of them are ordinary people who just want to survive; they're no different from the average Terran citizen. As such, they have little impact on galactic affairs.



TIBURON

The repressed and phobic Tiburonese tread ponderously through the Empire's walkways and corridors in their encumbering environmental suits. They allow their obsessive terror of contamination to rule their daily lives. Even the bravest Terran can't help finding these wheezing vassals, with their steamed-up faceplates and torsos swaddled in interlocking wreaths of breathing tubes, creepy. If it weren't for the advanced robotics and other industrial technologies they bring to the table, the Terrans probably wouldn't tolerate them at all.

Though it's hard to get a good look at a Tiburonese through the mask of his suit helmet, these Humanoids stand several inches taller, on average, than Humans. They sport elaborately flanged ears and a pattern of small bumps on their foreheads. Tiburon is a once-verdant world that has been entirely urbanized for centuries. By the time of their surrender to the Empire in 2130, the Tiburonese had colonized a number of nearby Class-M planets as agricultural bases. They also occupy the planet Ucali. The Ucali and Tiburonese were once separate species; they went to war when they first developed spaceflight. The warrior Ucali successfully invaded and occupied Tiburon, but the decadent and civilized Tiburonese won out in the end, converting the Ucali to their materialistic ways. The two groups interbred and are no longer distinguishable.

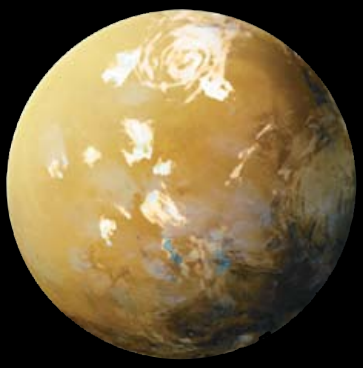
The Tiburonese have always been irrationally preoccupied with hygiene. During the last few centuries, their fears proved justified, as pollutants suppressed their immune systems. In 2107, the first of several plagues swept the Tiburon system. The Tiburonese bent all of their technological know-how to conquering them, but bacterial strains mutated faster than the cures. The germ *synthococcus novae* causes the worst still-extant disease, which is slowly fatal and so far incurable. By 2122, all Tiburonese were wearing anti-contamination suits from cradle to grave. They only take off the suits in their own living chambers, each of which is equipped with an advanced air filtration system that seeks out and destroys airborne bacterium on the molecular level. Tiburonese are so afraid of disease that they never touch one another. Not even spouses share a living chamber. Women no longer conceive naturally; all Tiburonese births occur in the test tube.

Along with their immune systems, the Tiburonese lost their sex drives. This happened even before they donned the contamination suits full-time. True to form, they developed a technological substitute for normal sexual contact: exposure to orgone energy. Alone in this chamber, they bathe in this curious form of radiation, which bypasses the body to directly stimulate the brain's erotic pleasure centers. Other species can take orgone baths, too, feeling the same sensations as Tiburonese. However, those capable of making bodily contact with romantic partners say that the experience pales in comparison to the real thing.

Orgone energy can be gathered only from other Humanoid species. The more overtly sexual the species, the higher the quality of their orgone energy. Tellarites emit weak orgone fields. Tiburonese find exposure to Human orgone energy intensely pleasurable. Green Orion slave women top the charts, second only to Vulcans experiencing *Pon farr*. Vulcans orgones harvested at other times exert virtually no effect on their users. The orgone extraction procedure irreparably damages the donor. Damaged orgone fields don't regenerate over time. Full orgone extraction reduces the subject to a desiccated corpse. Because orgone technicians can't tap a donor more than once, the energy is an expensive commodity tied to the price of slaves. Tiburon imports thousands of slaves per month for orgone extraction purposes. The orgone market now serves as the backbone of the local economy. Slave traders love Tiburon; it buys slaves too unhealthy or truculent to be useful anywhere else. Its insatiable demand for slaves keeps the supply tight and prices high. The enslaved, on the other hand, desperately fear shipment to Tiburon: you can't be freed if you're a dried-out mummy.

ORGONE EXTRACTION

A character's orgone field strength equals his Vitality + Presence + Courage points. For each fifteen-minute period spent in an Orgone Extraction Chamber, the player must make a Stamina reaction test (TN 15) or the character loses 1 point of that strength. He loses Courage first, then Presence, then Vitality. When Vitality reaches 0, he dies. Points lost due to orgone extraction do not heal, though the Narrator may create a storyline in which the Crew pursues an extraordinary remedy for the character's loss. Obviously, a character trapped in an orgone extraction booth provides a nice race against time for a rescue scenario—assuming that the poor fool has something of value to merit a rescue, that is.



VEGA IX

Vega IX is best known as the place where the famous Captain Kirk faced the second great test of his ruthlessness. This previously-uninhabited Class-M planet in the Lyra constellation underwent Terran colonization in 2230. The Bureau of Interstellar Hegemony chose it for strategic reasons, even though its barren, rocky surface offered little in the way of local resources to prospective settlers. Vega IX perches on the edge of Klingon space; the Empire wanted a colony there in order to make territorial claims in the event of a renegotiated peace settlement.

In 2265, a meteor landed outside the main Vegan settlement, Orbis. It affected Orbis' preadolescent children, giving them great powers of suggestion over their parents and other adult blood relatives. The kids, agitated by 10-year-old ringleader Jason Dukes, demanded that their families leave the planet in search of somewhere more fun. The parents applied for departure permits *en masse*, prompting the Bureau to pass a law forbidding any colonist from leaving Vega IX for any reason. Under the psychic domination of the children, colonists staged a coup, imprisoning childless administrators and declaring Vega independent of the Empire. Kirk's *Enterprise* responded to distress calls. His Security forces quickly rounded up the chief conspirators. It didn't take Kirk long to realize that the children had psychically inveigled their elders into their rash move against Imperial sovereignty. He therefore sent 5,000 parents to the firing squad, to teach the children a lesson about the responsibilities of power in a harsh world. Having pacified the situation, he left, advising local administrators to ship the psychic children to Vulcan for study and possible training as intelligence agents and assassins. The transport ship taking Dukes and the others to Vulcan veered off course and was never seen again. Inquiry into the incident revealed that the vessel's pilot was the illegitimate, probably unknowing, father of one of the children. Since then, several sightings of the lost children have occurred on Vega IX. Remaining colonists now wonder what vengeance the children intend to wreak on them.

VULCAN

The central question surrounding the Vulcans is whether they joined the Empire out of a sense of weakness and self-preservation, or whether they decided they could easily manipulate the impulsive Terrans as the true powers behind the throne. Either way, you can be assured that the decision they took upon first contact with Humans in 2063 resounded with unquestionable logic.

In the ancient past, the Vulcans were a warlike, highly emotional people. Constant warfare between nations, clans, and ideological groups kept the arid soil of the planet Vulcan green the with the blood of the vanquished. Two thousand years ago, an unflinching dictator named Surak arose. He proclaimed a new day in Vulcan history by introducing the discipline of logic and emotional restraint. Armed with logic, the Vulcans would live in an orderly society. They would fight others, if need be, but not other Vulcans.

Rejecting this doctrine were the followers of Tellus, a philosopher who argued that a people who discarded their anger, recklessness and sense of vengeance made themselves ideal targets for conquering savages. Order was a virtue, Tellus howled, but logic was not. He and his people fled the planet. They eventually became the Romulan people. Since then, the two groups have engaged in periodic warfare. Romulans still wish to prove Tellus right by destroying the Vulcans. Vulcans consider it illogical to allow a sworn enemy to live. None of their wars proved decisive, although the most recent one, from 1939 to 2041, did more damage to Vulcan than to the Romulan Star Empire.

Perhaps these military setbacks led the Vulcan leadership to assume the supine position when dealing with the Humans. When first contact came in 2063, they offered themselves up as vassals rather than full partners. The only one who knows for sure is T'Pau, who was then a junior member of the diplomatic delegation and is now head of state. Everyone else who was present is now dead or missing. Such things tend to happen to those who know T'Pau too well.

At any rate, T'Pau has in the intervening years brilliantly managed her relationships with one Emperor after another, always preserving her world's position as vassal

among vassals. Now two hundred and twenty-two years old, she doesn't lure Emperors to her bedchambers like she used to. A cadre of younger Vulcan seductresses stalks the halls of the Imperial palace, bending Senators and cabinet officials to their will, coaxing them into seeing them the inescapable logic of their positions.

Those immune to Vulcan charms learn to fear them. Wielding psionic powers subtler, yet more insidiously deadly, than those of the Betazoids, Vulcan mind-warpers needn't fear the Beatty Method (see p. XX). T'Pau's enemies should also worry about the vast catalogue of ancient Vulcan poisons, many of which elude detection to all but the most skillful coroners. Then there are the dozens of Vulcan snakes, insects, and lizards, often boasting nasty toxins of their own, who skitter about in response to their trainers' mental commands.

T'Pau lives a reclusive existence in a citadel on the desolate Plain of Tai-La. This imposing edifice confronts those rare few who gaze on it with a vision of cruel beauty. Its multiple latticed roofs are each filigreed with gleaming liquid ludugial gold held in place by a force field. Musk-scented hallways snake confusingly through the structure, wending from torture chamber to treasury to pleasure gallery. Secret panels conceal elevators, staircases, spy-holes, and spider crawlways. Eunuch servants, eyes and tongues gouged out, shuffle through the structure, navigating by clairvoyance.

T'Pau's minions are everywhere. Only a fraction of them are Vulcans. Would-be lackeys come from the far corners of the Galaxy to offer themselves to her, body and soul. She snares just as many unwilling servitors through blackmail, mind control, and outright coercion. The dungeons of her citadel hold hostage dozens of people whose family members serve T'Pau, hoping to earn their freedom. Some say that her network of conspirators shapes every significant event within the Empire. Others wisely fear her but deny her quite that degree of omnipresence. Senator Sarek maintains his distance from her, doing her bidding from Earth. These days, he almost never travels to Vulcan.

Vulcans follow T'Pau because it is logical to obey the strongest leader. Such leaders bring order, without which there can be no logic. By the same token, they claim that it is eminently logical to follow an obviously superior empire, rather than be conquered. Whether you believe this or not depends on your assessment of T'Pau's capabilities. Does she truly obey the Emperor out of perceived weakness, or is he always just a screen for her own machinations? After all, it would be logical to have a figurehead attract attention—and assassination attempts—while one ruled the Galaxy in seclusion.

OTHER WORLDS

The Empire is much larger than the Federation. Many worlds not yet discovered by the Federation's 23rd century explorers already writhe beneath the boots of the Empire's 23rd century conquerors. Here we briefly mention a handful of the Empire's other worlds.

Imitative Humanoids who style themselves as 20th century Humans fight for supremacy on Sigma Iota II. Once, due to a slight *misunderstanding* involving an early Imperial exploratory vessel, the Iotians took on the style of Human gangsters from the early 20th century. Sociologists from the Bureau of Interstellar Hegemony introduced other texts to selected population centers as an experiment in social engineering. Now various gangs, each following its own eccentric interpretation of Earth's most savage century, battle it out: madly scientific Einsteins target totalitarian Stalinoids, while paranoid Oswalds maintain surveillance on Carterian cyborgs.

On Organia, a joint Tiburonese-Vulcan scientific team maintains the sophisticated equipment that keeps the Organians imprisoned. The Organians, noncorporeal energy beings with god-like powers, fell prey to a team of Science Ministry researchers after first attempting to impose on the Empire a peace agreement with the Alliance. The team now studies the Organian energy matrices in hopes of granting pseudo-divine powers to Humans and their allies. If that fails, they'll use the Organians as an energy source.

The planet Husnock serves as a containment camp for an almost psychotically violent species of the same name. Their propensity for frenzied aggression had them mired in a pre-industrial stage of development when Imperial forces occupied the planet seventeen years ago. The Husnock would make superb ground troops if only the secret of taming them could be found. Imperial personnel oversee various behavior-modification experiments to attempt to bring discipline to the Husnock. A number of scientists recently died when their bases were overrun.

Acamar III presents an example of a typical recent conqueree. Its clan-based society has always been wracked by vicious feuds. After conquering it last year, Terran occupation forces worked to exploit this inter-tribal violence, keeping the natives at one another's throats while they drain the planet dry of resources and treasure. When the people stop fighting one another, they'll realize that their economy has been devastated. Then they'll be left to toil in poverty, or forced to labor in Imperial factories.

VIII Enemies of the Empire

Good citizens of the Empire pursue a simple duty: they must seek out and smash Imperial enemies. Foes are not difficult to find; anyone who does not bow down to the Emperor in willing vassalage fits the definition. Of course, not all enemies are created equal. The Empire faces three major regional powers: the Romulans, Klingons, and Cardassians. No single power represents a serious threat to its galactic hegemony, but the Klingons and Cardassians recently allied with one another, and that gives pause to even the War Ministry's most fire-breathing warmongers.

Klingons

Like the barbarians who harried the borders of Imperial Rome, the Klingons strike from the fringes of the Terran Empire, a constant source of both irritation to the Imperium and danger to colonists on outlying worlds. Human Emperors often compare them to fire ants; their bite is painful, and they're nearly impossible to eradicate. The Empire conquered their homeworld, Qo'noS, in 2218, but this simply forced the Klingons out into the rimward fringes of space. Captured Klingons make terrible slaves; they refuse to eat, let alone work, starving themselves to death if held prisoner without chance of escape. Naturally, if there is a chance of escape, they do so, fleeing to Klingon space, where they rejoin their compatriots to steel themselves for further incursions into Human territory. Terrans match Klingons in ferocity, determination, and ruthlessness, and far outstrip them in technology and access to supplies. The chief Klingon advantage over the Humans is the rapidity of their breeding. For every Klingon warrior the Terrans kill, another nine frantically train with *bat'leth* and disruptor, anxious to join the fray and prove their manhood. If you strike off a Klingon's leg but allow him to make it back to his home territory, beware. He'll join the legion of the maimed and elderly who, despite scarce materials and inadequate facilities, manages to cobble together one rickety bird of prey after another to throw at Starfleet. Now that they've allied themselves with the Cardassians, yoking their indomitable will to make war to the Union's industrial base, the days of jury-rigged vessels will soon be over. The Empire must ready itself for perhaps its greatest challenge ever.

History

Klingons regard history as too sacred to be written down; they prefer to sing their great moments in stylized, operatic performances most other cultures find intolerable. Thus it is hard to separate myth from history.

Like their rivals, Klingons started out as barbaric tribesmen perpetually raiding one another for food and territory. The Klingons, though, defiantly hold fast to their ancient heritage, sneering at what others call enlightened values. Every advance they've made has kept them true to their culture of savagery and conquest. Only once did they flirt with the civilizing influences that, in their view, have made their opponents weak and complacent. They tell the story like this:

"Fifteen hundred years ago, a terrible tyrant named Molor arose, aided by an army of unthinking minions, to conquer the warring tribes and unite the planet Qo'noS. Molor sought to change the Klingon people. He wanted them to adopt a concept he called honor. It would replace the lust for conquest as the highest

goal of a Klingon warrior, forcing men to restrain their true urges. Luckily, where tyrants tread, heroes always come to defeat them. The hero of that time was Kahless the Unstoppable, who fought and slew Molor, consigning his false doctrine to the grave."

Kahless may have hated Molor's theory of honor, but he liked the worldwide empire, and kept it in place. Throughout his reign, he put down near-perpetual revolts from regional warlords seeking to test his strength. One of them finally killed him in single combat, smashing his head in and throwing him off a cliff for good measure. Superstitious Klingons believe that Kahless' ghost sometimes materializes in the midst of battle, guiding the hands of the fiercest generals.

Kahless' slayer didn't last long as world emperor. A few months later, warlords loyal to the man he'd killed stormed his stronghold and slew him. Then they fought each other over the succession. Until the modern age, Klingon history swung like a pendulum between world government and utter anarchy.

Warfare drove Klingon scientific advances; warlords hoping to become world emperor funded researchers who promised them superior weapons and equipment. They developed prewarp space vessels in the early 20th century, spurred on by a world emperor named Kalok the Terrible. His sleeper ships put warriors in a drug-induced state of suspended animation. Kalok planned for them to find new worlds to conquer, so that his warlords wouldn't get restless and want to fight him. The explorers would report back, and then entire armies would be sent out on sleeper ships to combat these new enemies. The Klingons pushed out to other planets, building their space empire. Most of the worlds in close proximity to their own were just as resource-poor as Qo'noS was. None of the races they conquered had achieved industrial economies. Still, the effort did what Kalok wanted, giving his generals something better to do than challenge his supremacy.

In the 22nd century, the Klingon Empire encountered a much greater problem: the Terran Empire. A Klingon warrior trying to return with evidence of alien interference in the war of the great Houses wound up crash-landing on Earth. The Terran security and intelligence bureaus tortured him for information; under the influence of various sedatives applied by the Denobulan Dr. Phlox (who'd come to Earth in order to experiment with "holistic"—that is, theoretically unsound—treatments on other species), the warrior gave up information about the Klingon Empire and its location. This contact prompted Starfleet to finish its designs for more powerful warships, something that had been on the back burner due to budgetary infighting over the importance of suppressing local colonial revolts on nearby worlds like Alpha Centauri. Faced with the prospect of a larger empire with superior technology, the recently-promoted Captain Jonathan Archer proposed a plan to the Emperor: Fund the completion of his warp five engine (stolen from his father, whom he killed for the designs), and he'd volunteer his new warship for duty in learning about and suppressing the Klingons. Archer's plan worked; he vaulted into command of the most advanced Imperial vessel of the day. Within only a few months his expedition encountered a damaged Klingon vessel. He offered to rescue the crew if they would serve as slaves, but they refused; nevertheless, he managed to salvage the vessel, enslave its occupants, and drop them off on a nearby H-class (barely habitable) world. By the time Starfleet's slower ships could arrive there months later, his prisoners were thoroughly broken, and Archer's Vulcan science officer and pleasure slave T'Pol had cracked the Klingon technologies of shields and photon torpedoes.

By the late 22nd century, the new starship designs of the Terran Empire were ready, and the Empire decided to send a message to the raggedy Klingons. The *I.S.S. Ranger* warped into the Qo'noS system and arrogantly demanded the Klingons surrender. The Klingons agreed, asking only the mercy of being allowed to surrender in their own sacred ceremony—a ceremony that the Klingons soon revealed as a desperate ambush! Siezing the *Ranger*, the Klingons rapidly decimated the economies of their slave worlds building copies, but even these ships and Klingon ferocity couldn't stave off the inevitable. Klingons hate to think of themselves as ever being defeated, but the Starfleet campaign against them was so devastating that even they can't deny what happened. The Terrans smashed their core colonies, destroyed nine out of ten Klingon ships, and, eventually even leveled and occupied the homeworld itself. Klingon survivors retreated to the fringe of colonies and conquered worlds furthest from Terran space.

Reconstruction and Revenge

In the wake of their defeat, the Klingons retooled their society to achieve one overriding goal: the destruction of the Terran Empire. They want vengeance. They want their homeworld back. They've discarded every tradition and custom that doesn't somehow bring them closer to these goals.

Klingon females were once warriors, just like the males. Now any woman of child-bearing age must do nothing other than breed. Post-menopausal women, along with the elderly and infirm, build Klingon starships. Young men are no longer raised among their families. They're gathered up as soon as they're old enough to lift a disruptor and taken to military training camps.

Klingons alone can't build enough vessels to fulfill military requirements. They satisfy their need for labor by hijacking enemy vessels and enslaving everyone aboard. They hit Terran slave transport vessels whenever they can: these contain more potential workers than other vessel types, and fight back poorly. Klingon overseers fear sabotage of their vessels by hostile slaves, and relentlessly police their every move. The Klingon command devotes considerable resources to guard shipbuilding

facilities. Starfleet has attacked Klingon shipyards several times, both to degrade the Klingon capacity for war, and to rescue Imperial V.I.P.s held in the labor camps.

Klingon society's old feudal trappings have been tossed aside in favor of a straight-up military dictatorship. (They think they borrowed it from the Terrans, but they missed the fine points—there is an Emperor, but no Senate, for example.) They used to despise sabotage, assassination, and similar intelligence operations as cowardly. Not any more. The new Klingon intelligence agency, the *Khak'ma*, makes the Romulan *Tal Shiar* look like a croquet society. With the aid of hired instructors from the Orion Cabal (p. 69), they've become the quadrant's masters of covert operations. Their greatest triumph in this area was the recent poisoning of grain headed for Sherman's Planet, which precipitated famine throughout an entire Terran sector. Some of its best agents, like Darvin, mastermind of the grain poisoning, are Klingons surgically altered to appear Human. Most, however, are aliens of various species paid to gather information. *Khak'ma* officers routinely fool their agents into thinking they're working for conspiracies within the Terran government. Many people send information to *Khak'ma* believing they're serving T'Pau or a Senator planning a coup.

Young Klingons grow up hearing about nothing but vengeance against the Terrans. The only way to gain admiration and status is to participate in the war effort. Male youngsters who want to do anything other than fight are beaten until they're bristling with hatred. Women of child-bearing age who refuse to act as breeding machines are executed as traitors. The last thing they ever see is a throng of relatives, former friends, and neighbors, all screaming for their blood. Noncombatants who won't work in the shipyards face the same fate. Even willing workers face execution if they perform their jobs poorly: if a ship suffers damage in the field due to a manufacturing defect, the responsible overseer is beheaded. Overseers enjoy life or death powers over their underlings; they may summarily kill any Klingon or slave for incompetence, dereliction of duty, or insubordination.

The Klingons now deny themselves most leisure activities. They may write, recite, and listen to epic verse, so long as the poems concern great victories of the past, the coming humiliation of the Terrans, or the paradisiacal glories of lost Qo'noS. Klingons may also perform or watch operas on the same subject. They may drink themselves into a stupor while off-duty, so long as their work performance isn't affected.

The Klingons also routinely practice some selective breeding; officers have the pick of the smartest, most ferocious women, while warrior-thugs tend to father more warrior-thug children. The Klingons realize that their ability to overwhelm the enemy with rank after rank of roaring, berserk warriors is crucial to their success, and deliberately select for such traits in their soldiery. They also insist on officers fraternizing only with the most intelligent of women. The Klingons need to breed an elite corps of clear-headed officers to direct the new breed of slow-thinking thug they're so determinedly producing.

Another problem the average Klingon can't help thinking about is hunger. Between their focus on the war effort and the poor farming conditions of the worlds they now occupy, food supplies always run dangerously low. Raids for food supplement low agricultural production, but aren't enough to keep every Klingon belly full. The Klingon hunger for battle is literal: when they board a vessel or overrun a starbase, the first thing any crew does is ransack the larders in search of food.

Officers keep their warriors in line with the promise of loot. This means that they sometimes have to hit targets of little military importance because they're rich with plunder. Despite the effort to break down family ties, warriors still show great concern for their relatives. They strip any battle scene of everything they can possibly trade for food for themselves and their families. Until recently, looted goods from Terran vessels often ended up back in Imperial territory, after being sold by Klingons to Orion Cabal fences. The practice continues, despite officers' attempts to crack down on it.

Alliance

Klingon Emperor Kor decided that his people would never be more than a peripheral threat to the Terrans unless they freed themselves from poverty. When, in 2266, *Khak'ma* operatives informed him of Terran plans to hit the Cardassian Union, his fleet intervened. Starfleet managed to deal severe damage to Cardassian ships, communications, and industries before Kor arrived and turned the tide against them. Still, the Cardassians were eager to show their gratitude. Kor entered into a mutual assistance pact with Cardassian Legate Cascul not long after. The Klingons offered manpower and information on the enemy. The Cardassians provide them with the funding and technology they need to build vessels better able to compete with the best of Starfleet. The Alliance is young, and the two proud species haven't yet learned to understand one another. The Klingons think that civilization has sapped Cardassian drive and aggressiveness. Klingons think that Cardassians look down on them because they are desperate. They grumble that Cardassians have never really known the kind of deprivation they'd have faced if it weren't for Kor's intervention, and don't show enough gratitude for it.

Right now the strength of the Alliance hinges on the personal admiration Kor and Cascul bear for one another. Kor sees Cascul's perpetual teetering on the edge of violence as eminently Klingon. Cascul admires Kor's strategic foresight as worthy of a Cardassian.

Prominent Individuals

Emperor Kor wins wide admiration for managing to be simultaneously a calculating, forward-thinking strategist and a bloodthirsty, vengeful warrior. Beneath his back-slapping, bloodwine-guzzling demeanor lurks a steel-trap mind. Despite his men's misgivings about the Cardassians as a people, they support the alliance because it is Kor's idea. They'd follow him into the pits of Klingon hell if need be.

His right-hand man, Kang, heads the Klingon military. He maintains iron control over both his officers and the overseers of the Empire's shipbuilding efforts. Every so often he orders a round of executions just to keep people on their toes.

A ferocious warrior known only as the Albino helms the *Khak'ma*. Never quite at ease among the traditional officer corps, he's found his true role in life as mastermind behind the Klingon security apparatus. The deaths of numerous Imperial Security agents can be traced to the Albino's machinations. Little is known about his personality, though reports suggest he's quite the sadist.

ROMULANS

At first glance, the Romulans may appear admirable, at least in comparison to their neighbors. Romulan officers uphold a strict code of conduct. They show great gallantry to their women and children. When an officer gives his word, he'd sooner die than go back on it. They scorn the casual betrayals that mark relations between Human or Klingon warriors; instead, officers swear eternal loyalty to one another, and mean it. There is no better way for a Romulan to die than in an attempt to save a member of the same cadre.

This is all fine and good if you happen to be a Romulan officer. If you're a Romulan from a lower class, or a member of any other species, you'll see the true, sadistic face of their civilization. The officer's code allows them to do literally anything to you without fear of reproach. They may hunt you for sport. Or wound you to see how long it takes you to bleed to death. Almost compulsively racist, they exterminate entire species in the name of hygiene. If it weren't for their obsessive and largely self-destructive effort to exterminate their Vulcan cousins, they'd have laid waste to an even greater swath of the Alpha Quadrant, probably exterminating dozens of species.

Origins

The Romulan nation was born in 379, when Vulcans who didn't want to adopt Surak's doctrine of logic and order fled the planet. They did so after waging an unsuccessful terrorist campaign to destroy Surak's movement. It wasn't the order they objected to; it was the wholesale abandonment of emotion. Tellus, founder of an opposing movement, preached that the Vulcan people were defined by the strength of their passions. Instead of abandoning their emotions, they should use them as fuel, building a social structure to channel their innate violence toward a common goal.

Tellus' ragtag group of émigrés wandered through space until they found a new world, Romulus, and declared it the seat of a new empire. Their first few centuries saw little conquest; the Romulans, as they now called themselves, had to struggle just to survive. As they did so, Tellus and his intellectual heirs created a code of behavior for the society's elite. This code, called *d'chaat*, provided strict rules forcing its adherents to show passionate comradeship for one another, and vicious hatred for outsiders.

As the Romulan economy developed, individuals with the closest blood ties to the original émigrés formed a ruling caste. Throughout centuries of tumultuous social upheavals, they maintained control over an ever-growing peasant class. The rules of *d'chaat* changed to meet conditions, but always remained rigid, and kept the officer caste, as it was now styled, united.

D'chaat

D'chaat roughly translates as "reputation." A Romulan officer's overriding concern is for the respect and affection granted him by his superiors and peers. If he loses his *d'chaat*, he must act quickly to recover it, or face permanent ostracism. If ostracized, the officer is expected to do the proper thing and fall on his sword, to prevent the taint of *d'kavla* (loss of *d'chaat*) from spreading to his heirs. An officer who fails to rectify his state of *d'kavla* loses his commission; if he remains among Romulans, his former cadre mates are obligated to kill him on sight. They needn't do so if they encounter him off Romulan soil, though many will do so anyway.

Every able-bodied young man or woman of the officer caste is presumed to enter his career with a good reputation (unless one of his living parents is in a state of *d'kavla*.) For the rest of his life, the Romulan officer must take action to protect his reputation whenever it is threatened. The most important rules of today's code of *d'chaat* are as follows:

- The officer must accept any challenge against his *d'chaat* made against him by another officer of good reputation. The two disputants resolve the challenge by dueling—see below.

- The officer may not let any other officer call his reputation, or that of his spouse/fiancée, children, or ancestors, into question, without challenging him to a duel.

- Upon graduation from officer's training school, the officer must swear an oath of mutual protection with a cadre of fellow officers called a *projat*. A projat's membership may not exceed thirteen members, or drop below six. A *projat* may take on additional members to replace slain officers. If its membership falls below six, the cadre disbands and its members seek new *projats*. Each officer refers to other members of the *projat* as his fellows.
- An officer cannot stand idly by while one of his fellows is in danger, even if it means the sacrifice of his own life.
- He must similarly be willing to sacrifice himself to come to the aid of any officer's minor child, infirm parent or grandparent, or non-combatant spouse or fiancée.
- He may not insult a fellow, unless issuing a formal challenge for disreputable conduct.
- He may not steal from, or lie to, another officer.
- He may not do violence to another officer, except in the course of a duel, or in fulfillment of other *d'chaat* requirements.
- He cannot witness another officer's act of disrepute without challenging him to a duel. If the malefactor is a fellow, the duel must be to the death.
- He may not show cowardice or insubordination while carrying out orders given him by a superior.
- He may not allow aliens or inferior-caste Romulans to publicly address him in a familiar manner, insult him, or question his authority or reputation. He may not permit them to touch him without express or tacit permission. One does not duel with such riff-raff; one kills them outright.
- An officer may not have sexual contact of any kind with aliens.
- He may not marry a lower-caste Romulan.
- He suffers disrepute if he commits adultery in such a way as to make another officer aware of his behavior.
- If an officer learns that his or her spouse has committed adultery, he/she must murder the spouse and challenge to a duel the officer who has cuckolded him/her.
- If an officer's daughter or female ward engages in premarital sex, he must murder her. If her deflowerer is an officer, he must challenge the officer to a duel. If not, he must murder him.
- He may not touch garbage, decomposing flesh or other filth except in the performance of his military duties. Neither may he willingly enter a quarantined, vermin-infested, or disease-ridden area.

Dueling

The recipient of a challenge to duel chooses the weapons.

He may opt for unarmed combat, in which case the duel is settled when one combatant is knocked unconscious. Strict rules dictate the types of blows permitted in unarmed combat; they somewhat resemble the boxing regulations of Federation Earth. Duel supervisors never call off a fight to protect a duelist's health. It is not especially rare for one combatant to beat the other to death.

Duel by beam weapon employs specially rigged disruptors capable of firing one shot apiece. The duelists start back to back and walk thirty paces counted off by the duel supervisor. When the countdown ends, they turn and fire. The duelists repeat the procedure until at least one of them is hit. Dueling disruptors are set to Light Disrupt A.

Blade duels typically use the *chala,* a long, thin sword not unlike a rapier. Although a *chala* hit is more likely to scar than wound, a skilled or fervent swordsman can quite handily kill with it.

Cleanliness, Racism, and Genocide

Romulans obsess over cleanliness, physical and spiritual. They attribute military losses to insufficient cultural hygiene. After a major loss, such as Kirk's recent, devastating sally against them, they root out and destroy so-called unclean influences. Officers scrutinize each other's behavior for telltale signs of *d'kavla*.

High-caste Romulans believe that filth originates among the lower classes and aliens, spreading upward to taint them when their vigilance lapses. They imagine all sorts of nauseating practices among these groups. Aliens especially take the brunt of their neurosis. Even in the best of times, a Romulan officer enjoys total freedom to kill an alien (or for that matter, low-caste Romulan) for any reason at all. Most casual killings of this type occur when the Romulan fears that the victim is "breathing on him" or "tracking in bacteria."

In times of defeat or social unrest, Romulans may target entire conquered species, herding them into extermination camps for so-called "sanitary neutralization." Over the past three hundred years, they've done this to seven races, including the Zontak, Rurun, Skwahali, and El-Aurians.

With curled lip and raised eyebrow, Romulan officers proudly proclaim their racial and class prejudices at every conversational opportunity. Their all-encompassing term for aliens, *virikjsh*, literally means "filth". They call their own lower classes *ajaltho*, or "dirt mongers." They call Humans *raalar*, after a particularly loud and toothy ape native to Romulus' rankest swamps. Klingons are *wuspsak*, ("worm-eaters"); Cardassians, *sapha-phaa* ("conjoiners with the dead"). Worst of all, of course, are the Vulcans, who they call *d'kavla-otshik*—"disreputable ones who must be eradicated." Officers raise their children to parrot these slurs.

Romulan disdain for other species has even affected the course of their technological development. Early in Romulan space development, a Romulan research scientist claimed to be able to build, in theory, a so-called "cloaking device" which would make Romulan ships invisible to their enemies. Offended, military high commanders argued that Romulan ships should not need to hide from filthy alien scum! The aliens, they said, should always know that Romulans are coming, to give them time to be overcome with fear. One of the officers was so affronted by this suggestion that he challenged the scientist, an ex-officer, to a duel. The high commander killed the scientist. The Romulan Empire of the Mirror Universe never pursued the mythical cloaking device.

The Star Empire

Because of their propensity for genocide, few surviving alien races live under the Romulan yoke. Most of their several dozen worlds are colonies. Kirk wiped out much of their industrial base during his 2265 attack against them. An arduous rebuilding process awaits them. Nonetheless, they're diverting much-needed personnel, funds, and equipment to the extermination of the Cl'cli'cl, a race of insectoid Humanoids whose homeworld they conquered fifteen years ago. The Cl'cli'cl, who were at the agrarian level of development when the Romulans took over, can by no rational measure be held responsible for Kirk's victory. But the Romulans are an emotional people.

The Romulans should be, but aren't, grateful to the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance. Without them, the Terrans would surely be pressing their advantage and occupying Romulus at this very moment. They're not

doing so because it would leave them open for an Alliance assault. In the meantime, the Romulan Star Empire gets the breathing room it needs to survive.

The Star Empire's head of state is the Praetor. His post is hereditary. If he dies without an heir, the oldest members of each of the sixteen ancient founding families gather in conclave to choose a new dynasty. The Praetor's reputation and cleanliness must be beyond reproach; should he dishonor himself, he falls on his sword so that an heir can quickly take his place. The Praetor directly commands all branches of the civil government, as well as the Star Navy and *Tal Shiar*.

The latter is the much-feared Romulan intelligence agency. They are especially feared because their tight camaraderie prevents the usual internal skullduggery and betrayal that wracks most covert agencies.

Prominent Individuals

Sema, the current Praetor, squats arthritically on his massive, eagle-shaped throne, in an air-cycled chamber swirling with a subtle greenish disinfectant mist. His personal guard all wear enclosed brown-and-steel bodysuits with full face masks; any audience with the Praetor includes the subtle background hiss of the breathing apparatus and the venting systems. With his bald head, beakish nose, and near-constant twitching, he looks like an aging vulture given Humanoid form. Although his body now fails him, his mind remains sharp. No one who stands to benefit from his demise would dare hasten it. He'd surely find out and expose them to irredeemable disrepute.

Prince Thabian, his eldest son, stands to inherit the eagle throne upon Sema's death. Intense and wild-eyed, he commands a warbird staffed by a fanatically loyal crew. Thabian proved himself as one of the few commanders to survive a direct encounter with Kirk's *Enterprise*. He's sworn vengeance against the *raalar* of Starfleet, but Sema stays his hand. What they don't want now is a resumption of the war.

The poised and well-spoken Princess Oreta personally heads the extermination effort on the Cl'cli'cl homeworld. She's inherited her father's maniacal terror of bacteria. Her husband, L'mald, heads the *Tal Shiar*. Little is known about him, but his smashed-in, bulbous nose, a reminder of the many duels he's fought unarmed, suggests a pugnacious personality eager for confrontation.

Cardassians

The reptilian Cardassians might seem, at first glance, to be more easy prey for the Terran Empire. At first contact, the Cardassians had laughable technology compared to the Terrans' weapons and sensors. The Cardassians had only just emerged from their own frenzied self-annihilation; the strength of the Terran Empire would have easily rolled over the entire Cardassian sector. By chance, however, the Cardassians were spared—the Empire, already stretched and gorging itself on its successes, has started to fall to its own internal viciousness.

History

Of the four major powers, the Cardassians boast the longest accurate history. Human civilization goes back about 4,000 years. Vulcan history predates it by less than a thousand years. Klingon recorded history goes back a long ways, but they rewrite at will, showing little respect for the past. As explained in *Culture*, below, the Cardassian character is almost obsessively intertwined with this proud people's sense of history.

Cardassian history commences in earnest during the Gentaroc period, as farmer-raiding nomads made themselves kings, building walled city-states and going to ferocious war with one another. Cardassians recall this as their golden age. Mighty kings baptized their shields in the blood of the weak. Hoary-headed poets celebrated them in epics that to this day conjure up the sound of blades clanging against armor.

When one mighty ruler, Unthal Katret, conquered all of his neighbors, the First Unthalian era began. Cardassians learned to love peace and prosperity and the harsh justice of the Unthal Dynasty. The Global Legates, as the Unthal Emperors were called, demanded from their subjects excellence in all fields. Most especially they commanded that great works of art be created to venerate the achievements of their ancestors. Thus was born the great Cardassian love of art, which sowed the seeds of their cyclical destruction. At first, Cardassian artisans made the usual things of beauty to adorn the houses of the rich: flattering paintings, glittering jewelry, decorative dishware, and the like. But with no foes left to vanquish, the Cardassians channeled their innate ferocity into their artistic tastes. The triumph of one style over another substituted for the old battles between city-states. Aesthetes fought one another in the streets over modes of architectural decoration, verse structures in drama, or the relative value of tapestries versus paintings. The Legates smiled upon, even participated in, these cultural wars. The only person greater than an accomplished painter, sculptor or ceramist was the wealthy collector who'd managed to accumulate the best collection of that artist's work. (He'd win even greater acclaim if he managed to get his masterpieces at bargain prices.) The Cardassian obsession with art ownership outlasted their interest in particular artists and styles. The more they sought the new and exciting, the more jaded they became. Artists increasingly fell back on grotesque, hideous, and disturbing images to get a rise out of their audience. When freakish works got boring, too, people made their own lives into grisly performance art. They mutilated their bodies, defiled old, passé works once considered beautiful, and lived in drug-induced hallucinatory states. That got dull, too,

so they turned to murder as an art form. The world's most perverse killers became its most celebrated artists. Artists competed to outdo one another in acts of aesthetically-motivated gruesomeness.

Toppling the faltering Unthalian Legates after four thousand years of uninterrupted rule, the winners became heads of state. They graduated from art-murder to art-genocide. Throughout the Sedira Period—its name translates as "The Killing Time"—successive mad monarchs displaced one another as a death-crazed public demanded ever more savage expressions of their art.

The Sedira Period ended in about 6500 B.C. as global government collapsed. A new dark age swept the land. City-states went to war with one another again. Literacy, art traditions, and basic technologies fell by the wayside as Cardassia lapsed back into tribal barbarism. The glories of the past were forgotten.

Cardassia's history then begins to cycle. From barbaric origins, a civilization arises. Civilization breeds warfare, which brings political unification when the greatest general conquers the world. Unification brings prosperity, which fosters boredom, which inspires art, which gradually becomes boring too, until art again breeds blood-letting. Art-related violence starts as partisanship between supporters of different styles and escalates into aesthetically-inspired mass murder. This collapses the economy, throwing the Cardassians back to their barbaric roots, from where the cycle can begin all over again.

However, one great Cardassian, Urrent Gar, sought to bring the cycle to a close as he completed his world conquest in the mid-16th century. New art would be outlawed. People could enjoy any old art that survived, and could take part in non-fatal reconstructions of classic old performances, but would have to concede that the real thing was too potent. Cardassians loved art too much to enjoy it in moderation. Responding to Urrent's strength and boldness, the Cardassian people agreed to accept tight restrictions on their passions. Those who did not would be hunted down, put on trial, and executed. Urrent brought about the Cardassian dictatorship we know today.

First contact with the Bajorans showed Cardassians that there was still something to do even if they couldn't trust themselves to make art any more: they could conquer the Galaxy. Bending their industrial economy toward space flight, they threw themselves into the project with typical fervor. The new Cardassian Union colonized its first world in 1644, and conquered and enslaving its first alien planet in 1697. Since then, the Cardassians have expanded spinward and rimward. Due to the tenacity and defensive capability of many of the native species of the sector, their Union is still only a third the Empire's size, despite their much-longer window of opportunity. This statistic brings angry shame to the brow of any Cardassian.

Government

Cardassians believe in total dictatorship as the only protection from their otherwise self-destructive propensity toward violence. A strong government contains the bloodlust of its people, directing it outward to harm only others.

The military rules; the head of the Cardassian Central Command is also commander-in-chief of its armed forces. The military enjoys a strong, trusting relationship with its ultra-efficient intelligence counterpart, the Obsidian Order. A civilian watchdog agency, the Detapa Council, keeps an eye on the military and intelligence arms to ensure that they're taking sufficient steps to crack down on dangerous freedoms. The fourth branch of government, the judiciary, tries artists and other subversives. Once charged, criminals face certain execution. The judiciary takes special care that the public executions are exactly similar to one another and can in no way be construed as art. Still, many secretly evaluate these state killings on aesthetic grounds, yearning despite themselves for a return to the beautiful, gore-soaked old days.

Culture

Cardassians derive a feeling of superiority from their long history, at least when inter-galactic affairs run their way. When defeated, they retreat into melancholy and bitter self-reproach, ashamed by their inability to live up to the glories of their much-vaunted past. It is the melancholy, not the confidence, that acts as their secret weapon. When shamed, Cardassians are capable of summoning great reserves of determination.

Cardassians harbor ambivalent feelings about their absolutist government. They believe wholeheartedly in the need to repress their craving for artful mayhem. On the other hand, the temptation toward unfettered fiendishness pounds like a tympani in each Cardassian breast. In a way, they are grateful for the threat the Empire presents them with. With a powerful enemy to focus on, they can postpone their inevitable spiral into self-destruction.

The Individual and the State

Alien dissidents who accuse the Empire of being a police state should look to the Cardassian Union for a real example of the phenomenon. Imperial citizens may face considerable scrutiny when they run afoul of the rich and powerful, but are otherwise left to pursue their ambitions in peace. On Cardassia, the Obsidian Order monitors the activities of every citizen from cradle to grave. Each Cardassian must, at age ten, turn over a molar to the Order, for genetic fingerprinting.

Twenty years ago, Order researchers discovered what they claimed was the gene that marks profound artistic talent. It occurs in only 0.12% of the population. Children bearing this gene are now executed by the state for the crimes they are likely to commit if permitted to reach adulthood. The average Cardassian wholeheartedly supports this policy, fervently hoping that the instinct toward great art will in their lifetimes be eradicated from the population. Unsurprisingly, families whose children test positive react differently to the policy. It is possible that testers have been bribed to cover up the positive test results of children from influential families. No doubt such children will carefully disguise their artistic talent as they rise through the Cardassian hierarchy.

Recent Events

In 2260, a Starfleet vessel, the *Defiant*, bombarded the surface of the Cardassian colony on Setlik II, killing thousands. Nearby Cardassian ships responded to the attack, engaging the *Defiant* but failing to catch it as it escaped. Since then, Starfleet has intercepted dozens of Cardassian vessels on reconnaissance missions. Counterintelligence operations capture four or five Cardassian spies a year. Starfleet's own intelligence operations against the

Cardassians reveal that they've learned a great deal about the Empire from 2260 to the present. Like the Empire, they've bent all available resources toward a major military build-up. Throughout this period, Cardassian vessels continued to spar with Starfleet ships in various small engagements.

In 2266, the first wave of the long-planned full-scale campaign against Cardassia suffered a setback at the hands of the intervening Klingon Empire. During its assault on Cardassia Prime, Starfleet fell victim to a surprise flanking attack by a Klingon fleet led by the Emperor Kor, in person. Starfleet rained destruction on Cardassian shipyards and command centers before accepting their weak position and staging a harrowing retreat through encircling Klingon lines.

The Alliance

Cardassia took a severe hit, but would have been conquered outright without Klingon aid. In the wake of Kor's sally, the two powers embarked on a formal alliance. Intelligence reveals that both sides are now frantically rebuilding, sharing technology and intelligence. In so doing, they're integrating their economies. Cardassians seem to get along extremely well with their new allies. In the Klingons, they see an echo of the great heroes of their own Gentaroc period.

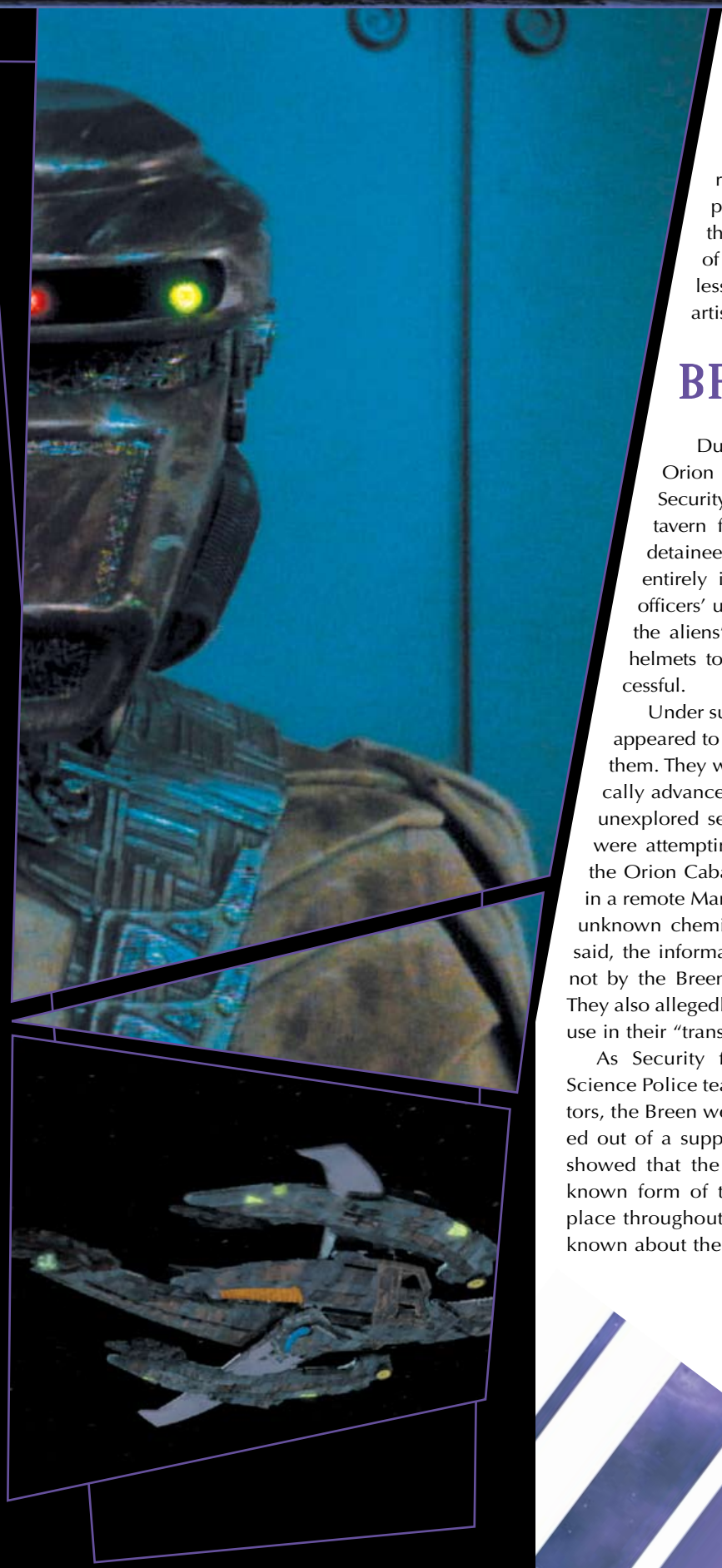
They envy the way in which Klingons manage to pursue their native art forms without driving themselves into a killing frenzy. Intelligence reports mention a sudden vogue for Klingon opera among high-ranking officers of the Cardassian military.

Still, fissures between the two camps exist, and might be profitably exploited. Cardassians, seeing themselves as highly cultured, react angrily to the Klingons' arrogant denigration of their "effete" ways. They also dislike what they see as the habitual Klingon lack of discipline, especially their obsession with looting. They hope to teach the Klingons the virtue of a more tightly policed society.

Prominent Individuals

The presiding head of the Cardassian Union is Legate Cascul, a wiry man given to sudden outbursts of rage. He attacks problems with a near-maniacal fervor that strikes fear into the hearts of even his most trusted aides. After the fight to defeat Cardassia Prime, Cascul earned the respect of his Klingon allies by personally beating to death an insubordinate starship captain. Even in his quietest moments, Cascul seems to be seething.

Winara Rast heads the Obsidian Order. The youngest person ever to lead the organization, she took command after exposing her predecessor's attendance at an illegal arts event. Since most of his aides were at the performance too, an entire generation of Order officials went to the execution chambers, leaving the field open for Winara. She plays the role of a soft-spoken, somewhat naïve young woman who made the best of a surprise advantage, but is not to be underestimated. She takes a special interest in the personal flaws of her foes, but herself leads an utterly blameless and spartan life. Winara is celibate and an abstainer from intoxicants of any kind. She doesn't even overeat.



Cardassia's equivalent of Captain Kirk is Markwa Eeremet, a rail-thin psychopath always ready to risk his crew to inflict additional damage on a fleeing vessel. Every intelligence report on Markwa mentions the high-pitched giggle that erupts from his throat as he contemplates the undoing of an enemy. He cracks down mercilessly on subordinates he suspects of artistic tendencies.

BREEN

During a recent roundup of suspected Orion Cabal members on Mars, Imperial Security forces arrested the denizens of a tavern frequented by criminals. Among the detainees were three Humanoids encased entirely in armored environmental suits. The officers' universal translators would not process the aliens' language. Attempts to remove their helmets to record their features proved unsuccessful.

Under sustained interrogation, a Rigelian who appeared to be a member of their party identified them. They were Breen, members of a technologically advanced race of mercenaries from a distant, unexplored sector. The Rigelian claimed that they were attempting to sell exotic armaments through the Orion Cabal. They also had a plan to establish, in a remote Martian location, a facility to produce an unknown chemical stimulant. From what the Breen said, the informant figured that this was a drug used not by the Breen, but by another unknown species. They also allegedly spoke of acquiring rare minerals for use in their "trans-warp conducer array."

As Security forces waited for the arrival of a Science Police team to modulate the universal translators, the Breen were, by methods unknown, transported out of a supposedly secure brig. Sensor readings showed that the brig's shielding, which blocks any known form of transporter technology, remained in place throughout the incident. This is all that is now known about the Breen.

THOLIANS

The species known as the Tholians remain an enigma. In 2268, they destroyed the *I.S.S. Defiant*. According to a recording beacon salvaged from the vessel's wreckage, the Tholian commander identified himself as Loskene and demanded immediate retreat. Loskene appeared on the viewscreen as either an alien wearing a helmet, or one with a faceted head. His image was distorted, possibly by the same radiation to which the beacon was exposed.

The Empire has always made a policy of sending an expeditionary force out to retaliate against any military that shoots down a Starfleet vessel. However, with tensions running high due to the Cardassian-Klingon Alliance, Emperor Gill took the advice of Captain Spock (whose *Enterprise* recovered the *Defiant*'s beacon) and has held off on any reprisals against the Tholians—for now.

GORN

The reptilian Gorn inhabit a small cluster of planets near the former Imperial colony called Cestus III. Fierce carnivores, they elicit fear from even the most battle-hardened enemies. There's just something about knowing your enemy intends to devour you after it kills you that awakens a sense of primeval terror. Their huge, clamping jaws and raking claws add to the fear equation. Even so, despite their thick, scaly skin, they're just as vulnerable to phaser fire as any species, as Starfleet forces learned during their retaliatory raid on Gorn forces occupying Cestus III.

The raid was interupted by the materialization of highly advanced aliens with god-like powers. These beings, the Metrons, forced Captain Kirk and his Gorn counterpart into single combat. Kirk won by fashioning a makeshift gunpowder weapon, but paused before killing him. Kirk wanted to torture the Gorn for information about his species before dispatching him. The Metrons, however, interpreted his action as a show of mercy, and banished Kirk and the *Enterprise* from Gorn space. As they did so, they pronounced Humans too spiritually weak to serve the Metrons in their "Grand Vocation," whatever that is. The Gorn, presumably, were selected as being the more savage of the two species.

An energy barrier has since appeared around Gorn space, preventing Starfleet from gaining more information or conquering Gorn planets. Gorn have been spotted on Ferenginar and aboard Klingon vessels. Starfleet would dearly like to know what the Metrons and Gorn are planning.

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

If you're playing in a 24th century series, the material in this chapter represents history as you know it. If you're playing in a 23rd century game, you might want to skip this chapter, to preserve surprises your Narrator may spring on you. If you're a Narrator, you should assume that your players have treacherously read this chapter anyway, and therefore change the details of future history accordingly.

Just as you shouldn't feel constrained by 24th century continuity when running a standard *Star Trek* series, you needn't force events in your 23rd century Mirror Universe series to conform to the history given here. Let your players feel they can have as big an effect on history as Spock, Cogley, and T'Pau. Maybe their help is what it takes to make Spock's crusade a success instead of an invitation to disaster.

To reflect the changeable nature of this chapter's history, we've put it in the present tense.

CAPTAIN SPOCK

After killing Kirk, Spock accepts both a commission as Captain of the *Enterprise* and the gratitude of Emperor Gill. Gill is glad to see the protégé of his predecessor, Garth of Izar, out of the picture. As captain, Spock distinguishes himself by cleverly disposing of numerous threats to Imperial Security. He gains the confidence of War Minister Matt Decker, aboard the *Enterprise* on an inspection tour, by using logic to short-circuit the computer intelligence of the *Doomsday Machine*. With Scotty's help, he redesigns the *Doomsday Machine* to make it into a usable vessel, turning it over to Decker for his personal use. On Pyris VII, he outwits, and then strikes a bargain with, two non-Humanoid aliens, Sylvia and Korob, who possess powerful illusionary abilities. He gains from them a transmuter power-wand allowing him to create entire complex illusions capable of fooling all six senses.

Spock uses an anti-matter bomb to kill a giant space amoeba that threatens to destroy the Vulcan-crewed *I.S.S. Intrepid*. Its captain, Yevok, reasons that Spock must succeed T'Pau as ruler of Vulcan. Yevok returns to Vulcan and recruits other minions of T'Pau to form cells in preparation for an eventual coup.

Spock makes his first post-conversion trip to the 20th century after encountering a space traveler named Gary Seven who claims to have been raised by aliens. Spock tampers with the time stream when he meets Emperor Oswald and persuades him that the Empire must moderate its savagery in order to survive for another thousand years. Although this change seems subtle, Spock finds a different Empire waiting for him when he returns.

Secret Policeman Spock

Emperor Gill cuts short Spock's Starfleet career in 2270, putting him in charge of a special branch of Imperial Security dedicated to rooting out an underground dissident organization. The dissidents, called Oswaldites, are mostly Terrans inspired by the reformist writings of 20th century Emperor Oswald. The group was nonexistent before Spock's trip back in time, but in the rearranged history has existed for many decades. Over the next year, Spock monitors the Oswaldites, protecting them from punishment. Spock learns that Vassal Affairs Minister Samuel T. Cogley heads the Oswaldites. The new Cogley is an idealist posing as a cynical manipulator in order to change the system from within. Spock reveals his intentions to Cogley. Together

they plot for Spock to replace Melakon as Security Minister. In 2271, they convince Emperor Gill that Melakon plans to assassinate him. Melakon goes to the execution chamber. Spock expects to take Melakon's place, but events in deep space change his destiny.

V'Ger

An intelligent, extremely destructive interstellar probe that calls itself V'Ger enters Imperial space and begins smashing vessels and star bases. The new captain of the *Enterprise*, Will Decker, is assigned to investigate. War Minister Matt Decker can't resist the urge to shepherd his son through his first crucial mission, and travels to the scene in the *I.S.S. Doomsday Machine*. V'Ger and the *Doomsday Machine* destroy one another; War Minister Decker is killed along with his entire crew.

WAR MINISTER SPOCK

Emperor Gill makes Spock Minister of War and elevates Cogley to head Imperial Security. With Cogley to cover his tracks—and to give a free hand to the growing Oswaldite movement—Spock can now begin to implement his plans. He and Cogley persuade Gill that the way to neutralize the Oswaldites is to make some token gestures toward alleviating the misery of average citizens on disadvantaged worlds, such as Rigel VII. Gill announces that the treasury will divert resources from the war effort in order to improve peoples' lives. Spock approaches Revenue Minister Mudd and presents him with the plans for this infrastructure investment program. Although it clearly spends trillions of credits more than the Emperor envisions, Spock persuades Mudd that it is nothing more than an opportunity for a massive skimming operation. Excited by the prospect of multiplying his bank accounts by an order of magnitude, Mudd agrees. His eagle-eyed assistant, Magda Kovacs, remains suspicious, and confronts Spock, accusing him of Oswaldite sympathies. Recalling a strategy frequently employed by Kirk, Spock seduces the lovelorn woman. She becomes his fiercest advocate.

In 2272, the massive spending campaign begins. In 2273, Cogley catches and turns agents of both the *Khak'ma* and *Tal Shiar*. Not wanting either the Alliance or the Romulans to know he's stepped down the military build-up, he feeds both intelligence agencies information suggesting the opposite. Preoccupied with his mission to reform the Empire, Spock misses the logical error in this stratagem. Although the disinformation will, in the short term, stop the Alliance from attacking, its long-term effect will be to motivate them to step up their own shipbuilding campaign even further.

In 2273, a mid-level official at the Revenue Ministry slips Emperor Gill a file containing the actual spending numbers. The official thinks it's all a graft operation on Mudd's part, a theory that Gill buys. Thinking only that he should be getting a piece of the action, Gill confronts Mudd privately instead of having him arrested. The two unathletic men end up exchanging blows on Mudd's antique Centauran carpet. Gill brains Mudd with a statuette. Magda Kovacs bursts into her boss' office and repeatedly stabs Gill with a collectible letter opener. Mudd lives; Gill dies. After recovering from his concussion, Mudd becomes Emperor, the official story casting him as Gill's killer. Still seeing only the opportunities for personal profit, he sticks to Spock's program.

Meanwhile, in the colonies, Spock's loosening of the purse strings brings on a sudden economic boom. In turn, the newly prosperous become bolder in demanding greater personal freedoms. The Oswaldite movement grows by leaps and bounds. People become openly critical of the regime. Cogley's Security apparatus cracks down on the dissidents in the most flagrantly rebellious colonies, but turns a blind eye to the activities of more level-headed reformers.

In 2274, Cogley and Spock convince Mudd to grant a few cosmetic civil rights to the public. As they did with Gill and the economic reforms, they downplay the significance of the measures they plan to implement. Before the Senate, Mudd announces plans to grant limited autonomy to some colonies, and to raise about a dozen subject planets to full vassal status. Conservative Senators, led by Sarek and Gav, stage a walkout, predicting disaster for the Empire if it relaxes even slightly its iron grip on outlying worlds.

Since his decision to join Starfleet rather than the ambassadorial corps, Spock's relationship with his father has been strained. He speaks to Sarek, hoping to show him the logic of his position. Instead, the older man presciently foretells that Spock's reforms will merely weaken the Empire, allowing an Alliance takeover. Spock reluctantly concludes that he must assassinate his father. Sarek removes any qualms Spock may have about this by sending a team of Ferengi assassins to kill him. Spock uses the power wand he got from Korob and Sylvia to lead the assassins back to Sarek's chamber. Thinking Sarek is Spock, the assassins murder the elderly ambassador.

At the same time, a second team of Ferengi *nakrim*, also sent by Sarek and his conservative faction, interrupt Emperor Mudd's pleasure excursion off the Alaskan coast. They kill him and everyone on board his yacht.

Spock, whose position depends on his relationship to the Emperor, is left without a power base. He can't prevent the conservatives from selecting their own candidate: Kodos, the aide to Emperor Stephane Louvin, who'd escaped during the coup that brought Garth of Izar to power. Spock and Cogley are arrested as traitors to the Empire and told to expect execution shortly after the coronation.

Salvation comes from an unlikely patroness. The new Vulcan ambassador turns out to be Yevok, former captain of the *I.S.S. Intrepid*, who swore fealty to Spock when saved from the space amoeba. Yevok seeks a private audience with Kodos and enumerates seven different methods by which his mistress, T'Pau, could smother his rule in its infancy. Yevok demands the reinstatement of Spock and Cogley to their posts. A shaken Kodos agrees.

Yevok visits Spock and assures him that she still means to betray T'Pau on Spock's behalf.

Kodos and the conservative Senators, now led by Gav, do their best to dismantle Spock's reforms. Meanwhile, Spock, Cogley and Yevok build a power base among the many other Senators Gav has annoyed over the years. Spock alters his infrastructure program so that graft flows toward his new senatorial allies. Kodos wins some battles, stripping certain colonies of spending projects and newly-granted civil rights. Spock wins others, as his senate bloc spares favored colonies from Kodos' budget-cutting campaign. Kodos wants to reinstate military spending; Spock's Senators want to continue domestic expenditures. They compromise by spending in both directions. This necessitates a massive loan program. The Empire borrows heavily from the Ferengi Grand Nagus. The value of the credit falls.

By 2277, Spock has a slim majority of Senators on his side. He authorizes Yevok to assassinate Kodos. Kodos is poisoned by a Vulcan scorpiopede. The Senators select a pliable non-entity, Alex Danaher, as Emperor.

Danaher is perfectly willing to resume Spock's reforms but two problems intervene. First, the Alliance steps up its incursions into Imperial territory. Spock must spend more, not less, on Starfleet, in order to repel the Klingons and Cardassians. This means going to the Nagus for more loans, which in turn depresses the credit, which makes the rebuilding cost more, which in turn requires more loans. Second, T'Pau calls in the favor he owes her. Having saved him from execution, she expects Spock to do her bidding. Like Sarek before her, she realizes that Spock's reforms would bring about the Empire's downfall.

SHOWDOWN WITH T'PAU

Spock and Yevok conclude that no progress is possible until T'Pau is removed from the equation. For the next four years, they build Yevok's Vulcan Underground, securing from hundreds of T'Pau's minions a commitment to switch sides when the time is right.

In 2281, Spock undergoes *Pon farr* and mates with Yevok's alluring sister, T'Jal. In doing so, he fails to account for the Human emotions of Magda Kovacs, who continues to see herself as Spock's lover. Kovacs, still privy to his secrets, travels to Vulcan and reveals his treachery to T'Pau. T'Pau sends assassins to kill Spock, Yevok, and Emperor Danaher.

Only Spock survives. He rallies his frightened Senators, convincing them that it is time to free the Empire from T'Pau's dread influence. It is time Humans once again dictated the course of Terran history, Spock argues. He gains support from certain conservatives who hated T'Pau more than they did him. Another colorless Emperor, John Cray, takes the throne. He declares T'Pau an enemy of the Empire, sending four *Inquisition*-class starships to bombard her citadel on the Vulcan Plain of Tai-La. The citadel is destroyed, but T'Pau's body is not found among its wreckage. Using information gathered by Yevok's underground, Imperial Security teams stage simultaneous, Empire-wide raids, arresting or killing hundreds of members of T'Pau's spy network. Only her closest aides escape.

The Alliance takes advantage of the Imperium's preoccupation with T'Pau, destroying a number of colonies and facilities, including even the mining installation on Rigel XII, in Earth's backyard. Spock wants to hunt for T'Pau, but must instead concentrate on driving back Alliance forces. Starfleet does so, but at the cost of many ships. By the end of 2283, the Alliance has retreated back to another cycle of rebuilding.

Starfleet gets no such opportunity. Piracy increases throughout Terran space. At first, this seems to be random opportunism, but intelligence sources increasingly point to a single leader behind the attacks. It's T'Pau, operating from bases in Romulan space. The Romulans neither hinder her nor fight by her side. However, she has another species to help her: the Metrons have lent her the bulk of their Gorn fleet.

From 2283 to 2285, Starfleet fights T'Pau's Vulcan loyalists and Gorn warriors. Her forces strike guerilla-style, quickly hitting shipping lanes, starbases and colonial installations, then retreating to hidden bases salted throughout the Romulan frontier. Attempts to chase them down put Starfleet in confrontation with Romulan vessels defending their airspace.

Genesis Weapon

Spock commandeers the *Enterprise* when he learns that T'Pau's pirates have occupied the Imperial research base on Regula I. There Dr. Carol Marcus and her son David have been overseeing the Empire's top-secret Genesis Weapon project. The Genesis Weapon can destroy an entire planet by reducing it to subatomic particles. If desired, the target can then be remade as a perfectly terraformed planet suitable for immediate colonization. Spock and the surviving members of the Kirk-era *Enterprise* crew (now all committed Oswaldites) battle T'Pau and a complement of slavering Gorn for control of the weapon. Spock ends up alone in the weapon chamber with T'Pau and Magda Kovacs. Kovacs, equipped with an exoskeleton that gives her twice the strength of Spock, fights him hand-to-hand, seeking blood repayment for her romantic disappointment. T'Pau suffers an accidental blow from Kovacs' exo-suit and is mortally wounded. In the course of the fight, the Genesis Weapon is activated and aimed at the uninhabitable planet of Ceti Alpha V. Kovacs falls into the beam and is scattered to atoms; the beam feedback destroys the weapon. A triumphant Spock demonstrates to a dying T'Pau the illogic of her plans, and is then himself slain by phaser fire. David Marcus, illegitimate son of Captain Kirk, has taken vengeance for Spock's murder of his father.

Sulu kills David Marcus; his mother attacks Sulu and is slain by Uhura. The schematics for the device die with the Marcuses. McCoy presides over a tearful funeral for Spock; his body is placed in a coffin and shot onto the surface of Ceti Alpha V. The revivifying energy of the Genesis Effect takes the DNA from Spock's body and replicates it. The *Enterprise* crew braves a combined Klingon-Cardassian assault to rescue him. Alliance forces briefly occupy the *Enterprise* but are destroyed by an array of booby-traps installed by Scotty.

The Probe

The next year, the old *Enterprise* crew again joins forces to alter the timeline. A gigantic alien probe appears in orbit around Earth and begins to bombard it with extremely damaging sonic radiation. Spock realizes that it's beaming a whale song at the planet, as if expecting a reply from one of those extinct marine mammals. The *Enterprise* goes back in time to 1986 to pick up some whales. Spock also takes the opportunity to further strengthen the doctrine of Oswaldism.

When they return to the 23rd century, the probe and whales interact. The whales, incited by the probe, grow rapidly into armored leviathans that roam the tsunami-swept oceans, destroying entire coastal cities. Spock finds a way aboard the probe, where he shuts down its computer core. The creatures, now vulnerable to phaser fire, are destroyed by the *Enterprise*, but the whale-beasts' rampage, combined with the loss of power and the sonic damage from the probe, has left much of the planet's industrial capacity in ruins.

Economic Collapse

Needing credits to rebuild Earth, Emperor Cray again taps the Ferengi for help. Grand Nagus Narl refuses to lend him any more money. Spock threatens the Nagus with invasion; if he won't loan them the money, they'll simply take it. Narl says there's no point; the money he and his predecessor loaned them didn't really exist anyway. It wasn't backed with ladugial gold. And also, if they do invade, his new friends in the Alliance will start a war and finish them off.

Although Narl promises to keep the financial scandal secret, word leaks out in 2288, and an Empire-wide economic collapse results. Corporations go bankrupt. Trillions of people lose their jobs. Food supplies dry up. Famine claims millions of lives. Starfleet can't even pay its officers. Its military buildup stops dead.

CONQUEST

The economic collapse affects even the Alliance. To the surprise of Klingon and Cardassian leaders, the galactic economy is sufficiently integrated to cause bankruptcies and job losses throughout their territories, too. Still, they suffer much less than the Empire and are able to complete their military build-up by 2293. *Khak'ma* bombs blow up Praxis, one of the moons of Qo'noS, wreaking havoc on the planet below. Klingon ships strafe Qo'noS' surface, killing the surviving Human colonists and reclaiming their homeworld.

Alliance fleets quickly cut their way through demoralized and ill-equipped Starfleet forces. The pace of their victory is slowed only by the Cardassian's methodical desire to fully secure one world before moving on to the next. Starfleet falls back to Earth, leaving only local resistance forces to face the Alliance as it mows over dozens of colonies, subjects, and vassals.

The remainder of Starfleet is smashed in its final defense of Earth in 2297. The *Enterprise* is one of the last ships to be destroyed, with Spock presumably on board. Just before it takes a direct hit and explodes in the vacuum of space, Sulu manages to maneuver the ship, its weapons system now crippled, so that a pursuing Cardassian vessel smashes into the Klingon flagship. All aboard the Klingon ship are killed, including Emperor Kor. The savage Humans resist occupation more fiercely than any other species, occasioning three years of house-to-house fighting before the population is finally pacified.

In 2305, a young man named Jean-Luc Picard is born a slave on occupied Earth.

MIRROR UNIVERSE

24TH CENTURY THE ALLIANCE

THE ALLIANCE TRIUMPHANT

The events of the late 23rd and early 24th centuries radically turned the tables in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants: the Terran Empire, once the unquestioned tyrannical ruler of hundreds of star systems and nearly as many sentient species, and a significant threat to both the Klingon Empire and Cardassian Union, found itself humbled by the combined might of the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance. Accomplishing together what neither of them could manage separately, the Klingons and the Cardassians smashed the Imperial Starfleet, conquered the Empire, and enslaved Humanity and its principal allies.

HISTORY OF THE ALLIANCE (2305-2370)

Following its final, decisive victory over Imperial forces in 2305, the Alliance moved to consolidate its gains, eliminate possible threats to its new-found power base, and solidify its internal structure and political relationships. This involved three distinct operations.

First, in order to ensure that it could hold onto the territory it had taken and that no remnants of Imperial authority, power, or resistance remained, the Alliance conducted a thorough and ruthless military sweep of Imperial space. The Alliance fleet—which remained largely intact thanks to its extensive ship construction and repair programs—divided itself into working groups and over the course of several years explored every Imperial system, seeking out the remnants of the Imperial fleet. In over a dozen systems the working groups found ragtag "fleets" of a dozen or two dozen ships, each hiding from the authorities (perhaps in the hopes of regaining power, or at least becoming some sort of renegade or outlaw power in their own right). In every case the Alliance sweep units destroyed these holdouts down to the last shuttlecraft. Such "cleanup" missions played a key role in establishing Alliance domination of former Imperial space.

Second, to prevent localized rebellions or resistance movements from arising (as they had on so many worlds when the Terrans held them), the Alliance moved quickly to occupy every major starbase, spacedock, governor's palace, and administrative building in the Empire. They subjected every Imperial technician and administrator whom they found to agony booths—interrogating them until they gave up any Imperial secrets they possessed—prior to executing them. While some in the Alliance later criticized this as a "short-sighted disposal of useful assets," the policy apparently proved successful in its primary goal of ensuring unquestioned Alliance control over all local and regional affairs within the bounds of the former Empire.

Since Cardassian and Klingon forces had been significantly depleted due to war casualties, other species belonging to the Alliance, especially the Bajorans, stepped forward to assist with this stage of the consolidation. The Bajorans, who had joined the Alliance almost immediately after being freed from the Empire's clutches, saw an opportunity not only to gain influence within the Alliance, but to pay back the hated Terrans for forty years of misery, oppression, and exploitation. Many Bajorans made their way into key positions of authority throughout the former Empire, from which they ground the Terrans down with a ruthless and unyielding fist.

Third, but perhaps most importantly, the Klingons and Cardassians formalized the nature of their political relationship, thus laying the groundwork for decades

of rule. An alliance formed against a common enemy in wartime does not, of course, guarantee smooth relations between the parties when the war finally ends. Many in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants began to predict a Klingon-Cardassian war, and a resulting balkanization of the region, in the absence of a mutual foe. But, for all their bellicosity and temperament, the leaders of both species were able to look toward the future and establish a system of government that has ensured the continuation of their alliance. As discussed in greater detail below, the Klingon Empire and Cardassian Union merged their two forms of government by combining powerful Klingon executives with an efficient Cardassian bureaucracy and a fully integrated military, thus taking advantage of both species' strengths.

Thanks to the thorough and ruthless nature in which the Alliance eliminated all opposition during these early years, no organized resistance of any significance could form on any of the conquered Imperial worlds. The minor rebellions that broke out on a few occasions were so brutally suppressed that they never lasted long enough to achieve anything. All Terrans, Vulcans, and other members of the former Empire bowed beneath the Alliance yoke.

By 2310, the Alliance enjoyed a complete and unquestioned hold on the conquered Imperial territories. Alliance forces located and destroyed all remaining pockets of resistance, and established new planetary authorities, with solid power bases, on all inhabited worlds of the Empire. Alliance territories—encompassing not only the former Empire, but the former Cardassian Union and Klingon Empire as well—entered its first tranquil period. This peace lasted, with only minor disturbances, for eight years.

The Q'aroth Incident

The first ripple of dissension in the Alliance occurred in 2318, when what should have been a minor incident dealt with through standard governmental channels escalated to the point where it nearly brought the Alliance to the brink of civil war. On Dalvos IV, a Klingon warrior named Q'aroth and a Cardassian administrator named Ghetros, both drinking in a bar, bumped into each other. An exchange of insults followed, and when Q'aroth drew his *d'k tahg* the two started to brawl. After several tense moments, Ghetros managed to wrest the knife away from Q'aroth and fatally stabbed him with it (leading some historians to suggest that Ghetros may have been more than a simple administrator).

According to normal procedure, Ghetros should have been arrested, interrogated, and perhaps punished for his role in the incident. However, Ghetros chose to use his *vesala* (his "web of influence," a system of favors owed and due endemic to Cardassian society which had come into use throughout the Alliance) to prevent such an unpleasant fate. By calling in a few favors, presumably from high-ranking Cardassian or Klingon officials, he arranged to have the matter dropped.

Klingons throughout the Alliance voiced their outrage. Not only had a Cardassian murdered a Klingon warrior, he'd gotten away with it through cowardice and deceit! This sparked unprovoked attacks on Cardassians by bands of Klingons on many Alliance worlds. In response, Cardassian officials insisted that the authorities investigate all such incidents thoroughly and punish those responsible for them. Where the Cardassians governed, that's exactly what happened; where Klingons ruled, few arrests occurred. Cardassian charges of favoritism only angered the Klingons further.

With one small incident after another, the situation continued to worsen. A barfight on Vulcan, a traffic accident that caused a riot on Dalvos IV, a lynching of a Cardassian merchant on Betazed—all fanned the flames of Cardassian-Klingon hatred and mistrust.

Matters came to a head four weeks after the initial incident, when a report reached the core worlds of the Alliance that a Cardassian vessel had fired on a Klingon ship in one of the outlying systems. The precise origin of this report has never been satisfactorily determined, nor has any such incident ever been conclusively verified. But in the heat of the moment, such facts remained hidden, and Cardassian and Klingon forces throughout the Alliance went on alert. Only rational thinking by several ships' commanders, including one Klingon first officer who killed his captain rather than let him fire on a Cardassian vessel, averted the outbreak of a full-scale civil war. Both species seemed hostile and ready to defend themselves, but neither relished the blame for starting a war.

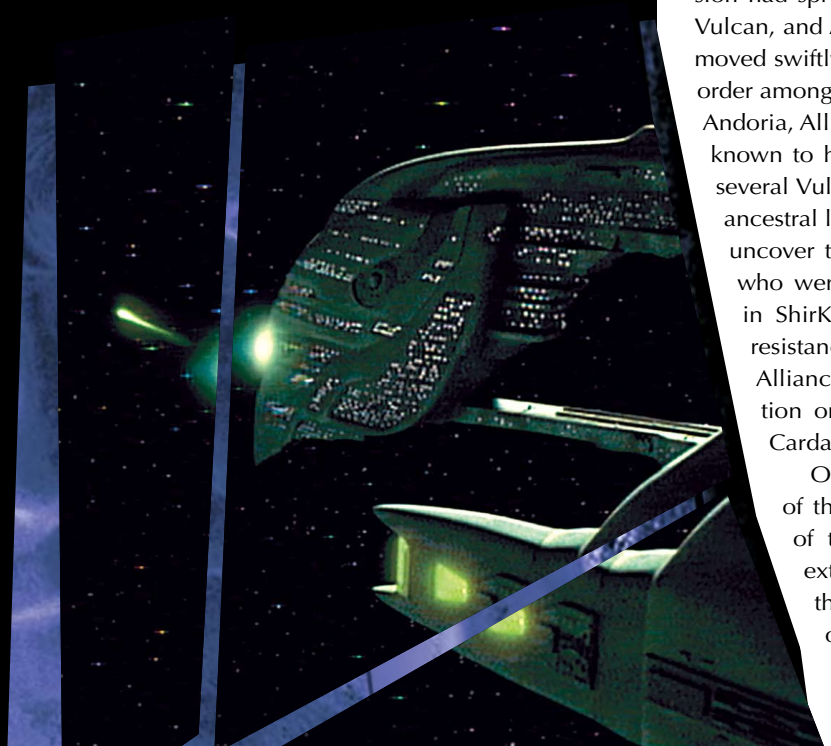
Since neither side desired an open conflict, Klingon and Cardassian leaders eventually came together to discuss ways to repair the rift. They negotiated appropriate solutions for the various problems, and meted out necessary punishments (including several executions) to the worst offenders. But the damage had been done, and many members of both species no longer trusted the other. It took another crisis over ten years later to bring them back together, but even today there are some Klingons and Cardassians who can trace an intolerance of or dislike for the other species to the events surrounding the Q'aroth Incident.

The Alliance-Romulan War

In 2332, following a long period of quiescence brought on by two defeats at the hands of the Terran Empire in the 23rd century, the Romulans once again began to exert their power in the Galaxy. Since their disastrous conflict with Imperial Starfleet Captain James T. Kirk in 2266, they had remained behind their own borders, concentrating their expansion efforts in other directions and their research on improved starship designs. With the development of the *T'rax*-class warbird in the 2320s, and the increasing success of the *Tal Shiar* at infiltrating Alliance society to gather intelligence, the Romulans decided to avenge some old defeats at the hands of the Klingons.

As usual, the Romulans began the offensive through subtle maneuvering designed to provoke the Klingons—a strategy that nicely manipulated the Klingon temperament. The disappearance of several Klingon freighters near the Romulan-Klingon border, and a few similar incidents along the former Terran Empire-Romulan Neutral Zone, prompted increased patrols of those areas by Klingon ships. The Romulans then fell on their foes in earnest, attacking each patrol vessel with several ships to ensure its total destruction.

When word of these attacks reached the headquarters of the Alliance, furious Alliance commanders ordered several fleets of ships to head for Romulan territory and destroy the attackers. Having planned for this eventuality, the Romulans initiated a long-range flanking maneuver and made a lightning attack on Qo'noS itself! The Klingon homeworld escaped major damage, but the blow to Klingon pride was a formidable one. Rather than attempt to extend their gains, the Romulans contented themselves with continued raiding, only to fall back into safe territory when Alliance fleets pursued them.



While wide-ranging battle zones and an extended front patrolled by both sides characterized the initial stages of the war, after a year or two the disputed region narrowed down to about a dozen systems. The Alliance's numerical superiority and ferocity found its match in Romulan treachery and strength. For much of the war the Romulans also enjoyed a small measure of technological superiority; the *T'rax*-class vessel remained the most advanced ship fielded by either side, and proved a telling advantage in several battles.

For the next four years, until 2338, the war slowly lost steam as both sides became increasingly tired of the conflict. The former Romulan ambassador to Cardassia eventually broached the possibility of a truce, and talks began. After several months of negotiations punctuated by frequent break-offs due to Klingon tempers or Romulan intransigence and sarcasm, both sides reached an agreement. Although a few systems exchanged hands, and the neutral zone between the two powers expanded, neither side ended up with very much to show for six years of warfare and millions of dead. Both retired to their side of the Neutral Zone to lick their wounds—and, perhaps, to prepare for their next conflict.

The Inter-War Period

The period between the Romulan and Tholian wars served as a time of rebuilding and strengthening for the Alliance. The existence of a common foe had healed the 2320s rifts between the two partners. The need to rebuild their forces, repair damaged worlds, and improve their position within the quadrants kept them close.

With the bulk of Alliance forces and security personnel focused on the regions closer to the front during most of the 2330s, resistance movements aimed at freeing Terrans and their allies from Alliance oppression had sprung up on many worlds, including Earth, Vulcan, and Andoria. After the war ended, the Alliance moved swiftly to quash these young revolts and restore order among the former Terran Empire core worlds. On Andoria, Alliance forces obliterated over a dozen clans known to harbor resistance members. The torture of several Vulcan priestesses and the destruction of the ancestral lands of four Vulcan great houses served to uncover the names of the resistance leaders there, who were soon captured and executed in public in ShirKahr. The Alliance relocated many Terran resistance suspects to prison camps throughout Alliance space, such as the new Terok Nor station orbiting Bajor, to labor on behalf of their Cardassian and Klingon masters.

Once again, the Bajorans took advantage of the relative weakness of the chief partners of the Alliance, seizing the opportunity to extend their growing influence throughout the quadrants. Where Cardassian or Klingon officials had been killed during the war,

Bajorans stepped in to take their places. Where other officials had shown incompetence by allowing resistance movements to grow, Bajorans killed them and took their jobs. By the beginning of the 2350s, the Bajorans had achieved a position of substantial political power throughout the Alliance.

The Tholian War

In 2351, an Alliance vessel unwittingly touched off a disastrous 18-year war. While exploring beyond the boundaries of Alliance territory, a science vessel captained by a Cardassian named Melok entered an unstable region of space. Unbeknownst to him due to the destruction of Terran Empire records during the conquest, this area saw the destruction of the *I.S.S. Defiant,* one of the most powerful vessels in the Empire's fleet, years before. Upon entering the region, Melok's vessel was confronted by a ship of the Tholian Assembly, which informed him that he had intruded upon the Tholian "territorial annex." Offended by their rude demeanor, and unwilling to back down before an unknown species, the commander fired on the Tholian vessel, destroying it.

The Tholians issued a swift and devastating response. In the face of a possible invasion threat, they swarmed up out of their homeworld in thousands upon thousands of small, powerful ships, destroyed the offending science vessel, and continued onward in a pre-emptive invasion of Alliance space.

Having received only a routine message from a science vessel concerning the situation, the vehemence of the Tholian retribution caught the Alliance completely unawares. Tholian "pressweb" gravity weapons and spatial disruption cannons quickly destroyed more than a dozen Alliance vessels, and damaged several planetary settlements, before the Alliance could mount an effective counterattack and temporarily halt the Tholian offensive. By that time the Tholians had reached five Alliance systems—but instead of capturing them, the Tholians simply drove off any approaching ships and destroyed ground emplacements.

The Early War

While the majority of the Alliance fleet moved to engage the Tholians, a small strike force embarked for Tholian space to learn more about this powerful new foe. That fleet, commanded by the Cardassian General Yedok Crin, never surfaced again. One moment it was transmitting a daily report, the next minute no trace of it remained. It was as if Tholian space had somehow opened up and swallowed the Alliance ships.

Laboring under an intelligence deficit, and faced with fanatic foes whose crystallo-organic ships and bodies seemed strangely resistant to many Alliance weapons, Alliance forces had to withdraw and reassemble, surrendering several more systems. However, this strategic retreat gave Alliance Forces Command time to fully analyze data gathered from previous battles. It found ways to withstand Tholian weapons (for example, by remodulating Alliance ships' shields to reduce the effectiveness of the Tholian pressweb). These innovations allowed the Alliance to mount a counteroffensive. Meanwhile, Alliance factories began churning out fighters and other combat vessels as fast as possible, so that the Alliance could meet the foe with both strength *and* numbers.

TEROK NOR

The Bajorans recognized that rich mineral resources still lay beneath the surface of their homeworld; if properly exploited, these resources could bring them great wealth without damaging the planet the way the Terrans had. Beginning in 2343, working in conjunction with Cardassian designers, Bajoran engineers constructed a multi-level, tri-radial structure resembling a vast "wheel in space" with elongated structures projecting upward and downwards from the outmost ring where it met the three "spokes." The station's purpose was to act as an ore processing and refining facility so that the pollutants from such activity would not affect Bajor itself. To the Alliance, it also served as an important prison camp for recalcitrant Terrans.

After several years of joint effort by the Bajoran and Cardassian construction teams, the station entered service in 2349. The ore processors, manned by Terran slaves, went online almost immediately, and have only stopped functioning for repairs since that time. Until liberated by the Rebellion, the station earned a reputation among the Terrans as a "death camp," a place where slave laborers died in droves due to the harsh conditions and harsher overseers.

The Road To... Victory?

Following the initial punishing years of the Tholian War, the Alliance regrouped, improving its position logistically and strategically, and began striking back at its mysterious foes. The first decisive Alliance victory came in 2357, in a major battle in the Choladra System, when a large, but still outnumbered, Alliance fleet managed to halt a major Tholian offensive *and* destroy the largest Tholian battleship seen in the war to date. General Korex, who would go on to serve briefly as Regent before being slain by Worf, served as the commander of the Alliance forces at the Battle of Choladra, and became a war hero overnight. The Alliance's morale problems began to improve as it realized that victory over the Tholians might lie within its grasp.

Things took a turn for the worse when the Tholians introduced a new, improved version of the pressweb. This version used what Alliance analysts described as a "subspace variance charge" to overcome the Alliance shield modulation and crush its ships with little effort. Several dozen *Vor'cha*-class ships were lost before it was discovered that beacons could be configured to emit subspace "static" that interfered with the variance charge.

During the 2358-2362 period, the war stalled, with neither side making significant gains; the Alliance remained completely unable to penetrate Tholian space in any way. However, during this time the Alliance built ships at a furious rate, turning them out of its shipyards faster than it ever had before. These accelerated production rates owed much to advancements in replicator technology, which allowed shipyards to produce certain previously unreplicatable parts. By 2363, Alliance forces had achieved decisive numerical superiority over the Tholians.

From 2363 until 2367, the Alliance slowly pushed the Tholians back toward their former borders. This effort cost the Alliance dearly, both in ships and in Klingon and Cardassian lives, but Alliance Forces Command recognized that the price reflected the gains. The advent of the Klingon Civil War of 2367-68 slowed, and almost halted, the Alliance advance, but even that unfortunate distraction could not stop the Alliance's military progress entirely.

An Enigmatic Outcome

In 2368, despite having never made any diplomatic overtures toward the Alliance, the Tholian Assembly raised the possibility of peace. In light of the Klingon Civil War and analysts' estimates that the Tholians were about to introduce new, more powerful weapons into the conflict, the reasons for this proposal were at best mysterious, at worst duplicitous. Many in the Alliance argued for rejection of the overtures, and the advance toward Tholian territory continued. However, in light of Klingon domestic difficulties, the casualties of 17 years of war, and the incredibly generous terms proposed by the Tholians, Regent Worf declined those suggestions. In 2369 he signed a treaty with the Tholians—Tholian forces withdrew to their original territory and the Alliance formally recognized the boundaries (including territorial annexes) claimed by the Assembly. The Alliance claimed victory, but to this day speculation as to why the Tholians decided to end the war—and whether they could have won it had they continued to fight—continues.

The Klingon Civil War

In the midst of the Tholian War, a bitter civil war broke out in Klingon space that greatly sapped the strength of the Alliance and prolonged the War's end by a year, if not more. Most analysts believe that, had the civil war not been quickly resolved, it could very well have led to an Alliance defeat at the hands of the Tholians.

The civil war occurred because of deep, long-standing divisions within Klingon local government structures. Under the terms of the agreement that established the Alliance, both the Cardassians and the Klingons retained control of their own primary systems, although each of them adapted their local governments to one more closely resembling standard Alliance models. Naturally, both Qo'noS and Cardassia Prime remained the two most important worlds within the Alliance, able to influence policy on a galactic scale. The intendants of these worlds acted as the *de facto* leaders of their people throughout the Alliance, and traditionally served as close advisors to the Regent.

On Qo'noS, the Regent historically chose the intendant from among the members of the Klingon High Council, a body composed of the leaders of the most prominent Klingon Houses. In 2367, following the death by poison (from an unknown assailant) of Intendant K'mpec, Regent Worf appointed Gowron as the new Intendant of Qo'noS. The Regent's reasons for this choice remain unclear. While a popular warrior, Gowron and his House were not among the most powerful on the High Council, and he enjoyed no great popularity among the members of that body. Most observers considered his chief rival, Duras (leader of the House of the same name), the most likely candidate.

The selection of Gowron immediately split the High Council. A few Houses—perhaps a third—supported him out of fear of the Regent (or to curry favor with him). The rest backed Duras, who declared that he would take the intendancy by force rather than let an upstart remain in office. Ordinarily such a declaration would have brought the Regent down on Duras with the full might of the Alliance behind him, resulting in the swift execution of everyone in the offending House. This time, however, Regent Worf declared the matter a local Klingon affair, decreeing that the two should decide the matter as warriors. Perhaps he simply wanted to ensure that the most powerful of the two assumed the intendancy, or maybe he did not want to draw any ships away from the war against the Tholians. Perhaps he saw a chance to draw out two enemies and have them eliminate one another. Whatever his reasoning, his decision ignited a civil war.

From the beginning, Duras' supporters heavily outnumbered Gowron's forces. While Gowron enjoyed a few powerful allies, such as the House of Mogh (the Regent's House), Duras' forces exceeded his by as much as two to one in some areas. In the grand tradition of underdogs throughout history, Gowron turned to trickery and treachery to accomplish what naked force could not. As his forces fought a delaying action, he used his network of contacts and influence—one of his greatest assets—to co-opt key members of the Duras forces. This strategy took time, and in the interim Gowron's ships and men suffered extensive casualties. But by early 2368, the maneuver began to pay off. Several important Duras ships defected to Gowron's side; others suffered mysterious failures in key systems during crucial battles, resulting in their destruction.

The turning point came when Duras' sisters, Lursa and B'Etor, distanced themselves from him. As if sensing the ultimate outcome, or perhaps wishing to influence it, the Duras Sisters withdrew from the conflict, leaving their brother to stand or fall on his own. With newfound momentum, the forces of Gowron won victory after victory, smashing the reduced Duras fleets in several important battles. Near the end of 2368, Duras found himself trapped in the Tolkath System along with his remaining fleet. There Gowron annihilated his enemy, bringing the civil war to an end.

Since that time Gowron has served as the unquestioned intendant of Qo'noS, enjoying the full support of the Regent. Rumors persist that Gowron resents the Regent's refusal to support his own appointment (thus causing the war), and that he has plans in motion to eliminate the Regent and assume the throne himself!

The Rise of the Terran Rebellion

Although it emerged from the Tholian War more unified than ever, the ravages of war had substantially weakened the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance. Losses during the Tholian War and Klingon civil war left the Alliance short on manpower and ships; those ships it did have were often damaged, or suffered from the chronic parts and equipment deficits so common in wartime. This left an opening for the oppressed species in Alliance space to rebel against their hated masters.

In 2370, separate resistance movements sprang up in several places, including Earth, Betazed, Andoria, and the Bajor Sector. While no evidence suggests that these groups functioned together, or even communicated with each other, they soon established channels of contact to share information and coordinate attacks against their hated Alliance masters. Since Terrans quickly appeared at the forefront of this uprising, the leaders of the Alliance began referring to it as the "Terran Rebellion" (at least in private; in public they never acknowledged its existence).

Modern analysts place much of the initial resistance activity in the Bajor Sector. In the Bajor-B'hava'el System, Intendant Kira Nerys ruled from the orbital mining station Terok Nor. A riot there, apparently led by a former technician named Miles O'Brien and a pirate named Benjamin Sisko (who was once Kira's servant and lover), grew into a widespread rebellion when the rebels seized several small ships and fled into an unstable region of space known as the Badlands.

On Earth, the seeds of rebellion sprang from a most unlikely candidate: a balding, elderly scientist named Jean-Luc Picard. Born in 2305 into a privileged family whose members betrayed key Terran Empire defensive installations to the Alliance Forces in exchange for wealth and power in the new regime, Picard studied at several universities and became a well-known archaeologist. While not granted the freedom given to Cardassian and Klingon archaeologists, he was able to study many sites and make some important discoveries. But despite his relative freedom, he yearned for more. He bitterly resented the restrictions placed on his movements and the petty indignities heaped upon him by the Alliance oppressors.

Eventually he began to entertain thoughts of overthrowing the Alliance and returning Earth, at least, to Terran control. After hearing rumors of similar events in the Bajor Sector, he realized he could make his dream come true. Putting out subtle feelers into the underground, he found important allies in three persons: a popular labor camp leader named Riker, a technician named LaForge, and a scientist named Janeway (who, like him, came from a privileged background). The four of them formed the nucleus of what would eventually become a widespread anti-Alliance terrorist conspiracy. Announcing their existence and intentions with the detonation of a bomb that destroyed substantial portions of the Alliance's Earth headquarters in Kolara (the former city of Paris), they attracted many followers and have since become a substantial thorn in the Alliance's side. (See chapter Twelve for more information on the rebellion.)

The Alliance Government

Despite the recent rise of the Terran Rebellion, the Alliance remains one of the most powerful governments the Alpha and Beta Quadrants have ever seen. In terms of personnel, ships, and territory, it dwarfs the Terran Empire, and likely the Romulan Star Empire as well. Having withstood challenges from both the Romulans and Tholians, it has firmly established itself as the preeminent power in this part of the Milky Way Galaxy.

The Structure of the Alliance

The Alliance is a militocratic autocracy. Its leaders rule with a harsh, powerful fist, their power flowing from the military strength they can bring to bear on anyone who challenges them. The Alliance responds swiftly to any dissent or refusal to follow the commands of its authorities, crushing such disobedience utterly. The punishment for any offense involving disobedience, treason, or treachery is death. If the authorities feel merciful and the offender lucky, death comes quickly; otherwise the Alliance's executioners prefer to draw such events out for the entertainment of their masters.

The Regent

The ruler of the Alliance holds the title of *Regent*. Although he wields the powers of an emperor, the title Regent connotes his true position—in theory, he represents the best interests of the Klingon and Cardassian peoples, ruling on their behalf and in their name. So the Articles of Alliance read, but in truth the Regent can do whatever he pleases as long as he enforces Alliance sovereignty. Per the terms of the Articles, a Klingon always serves as Regent.

The Alliance Palace, in the First City on Qo'noS, serves as the Regent's seat. The largest manmade structure in the Alliance, its enormous façade stretches for several kilometers, presenting a strength and majesty representative of the Regent himself. The Regent also maintains palaces on several key worlds, including Cardassia Prime, Earth, and Tellar, as well as a number of orbital facilities (including Ty'Gokor in Klingon space and the Saturn Fortress in Earth's solar system). Each Regent typically constructs several secret headquarters as well, which only his most trusted personnel know about.

As of 2370, Regent Worf of the House of Mogh rules the Alliance. Large and strong, even for a Klingon, he killed his predecessor, Korax, in a brutal melee; it is said he finished his opponent by strangling Korax with his bare hands. Worf combines an unusually high level of Klingon brutality with an almost Cardassian-like cleverness. Those who work near or with him constantly fear running afoul of his capricious, hair-trigger temper. The tiniest slip may result in the offender's execution.

Sector Command

The Alliance divides its territory into *sectors,* cubic areas of space roughly 20 light-years long on a side (but sometimes larger or smaller, depending on population density, astronomical phenomena, and other factors). Examples include Qo'noS Sector, Earth Sector, Bajor Sector, and Bolarus Sector. In many cases the location and designation of a sector derive from old Terran Empire records.

A *Sector Command* controls each sector under the direction of a *Sector Commandant*. Sector Commands derive their authority as much from the Alliance Forces as they do from the government, since the Sector Commandants also command the ships and soldiers in their sectors and depend on such military support to govern effectively.

Sector Commandants hold important and powerful positions (especially in key sectors such as Earth Sector or Bajor Sector), though their lofty status often proves precarious. Lesser officials commonly target Commandants for assassination or disgrace, since traditionally whoever removes a Commandant from office assumes his position. Both Cardassians and Klingons serve as Sector Commandants.

Intendants

Intendants govern specific star systems, such as Earth System or the Bajor-B'hava'el System. In regions sparsely settled by Alliance citizens, an intendancy may encompass more than one star system; conversely, heavily settled systems, such as the Rigel System, possess intendants for each inhabited planet, rather than one for the whole system.

In most systems, the populace fears the intendant more than any other government official. Sector Command remains a distant and abstract entity most of the time, but intendants embody a tangible and ongoing presence (and, in some regions, exercise more power throughout the sector than Sector Command). Strong and ruthless individuals who brook no challenges to their authority, they order executions, confinement, torture, and other punishments as casually as they order the gourmet food on which they feast. Some, such as Intendant Kira Nerys of the Bajor-B'hava'el system, use their position to satisfy their perverse desires. Klingons, Cardassians, Bajorans, and other favored species serve as intendants.

THE ALLIANCE FORCES

The Alliance Forces—the empire's military arm—form the backbone of Alliance power. The largest armed force in quadrant history, the Forces allow the Alliance to project its strength wherever it pleases. As long as the military remains happy, the Regent remains in power and the stewardship of the Alliance proceeds smoothly. When the military grows discontent, Regents fall and chaos often reigns.

The Regent serves as commander-in-chief of the Forces, but the Alliance Forces Command maintains day to day responsibility for most command issues. It decides where ships go, what campaign to undertake or strategies to use in various conflicts, and so forth. Technically it also controls who gets promoted, but in most situations promotion issues resolve themselves within a given crew by violent means; Command simply rubber-stamps the outcome.

The *Negh'Var*—the largest, most powerful ship ever built in the Alpha Quadrant—serves as the flagship of the Alliance Forces. Dwarfing even the *D'deridex*-class warbirds of the Romulan Star Empire, its weapons can obliterate entire planets. When the *Negh'Var* appears in a system, the inhabitants tremble.

THE OBSIDIAN ORDER

Whereas the Klingons have rarely had much use for espionage, the Cardassians mastered such disciplines centuries ago. After the Alliance formed, the Klingons allowed the Cardassians to form and operate the new empire's intelligence service, provided that they used the former Klingon Intelligence operatives in their preferred role as commandos and saboteurs (a stipulation the Cardassians were only too happy to meet). To simplify matters, the Cardassians simply adopted their existing espionage apparatus, the ruthlessly efficient Obsidian Order, into the Alliance governmental structure. While technically referred to on paper as the "Alliance Intelligence Service," most Klingons and Cardassians continue to refer to it as the Obsidian Order.

The Intendants of Qo'noS and Cardassia Prime

The intendants who rule the Qo'noS System and Cardassia System—Gowron and Dukat, respectively—enjoy a special measure of power. By Alliance tradition, they act as the leaders of their respective people, even though they technically wield no more authority than any other intendant. When Dukat speaks, he speaks for the Cardassian people, and Gowron does the same for the Klingons. When issues relating to the nature or structure of the Alliance arise, the intendants of those two systems meet with the Regent to resolve any problems. In short, after the Regent, these two intendants are the most powerful leaders in the Alliance.

Planetary Governors and Local Government

Governors govern individual inhabited planets. A governor's power depends largely on the importance of his planet, but even the weakest of them possess more power and wealth than the average Alliance citizen. Plenty of underlings await the chance to kill even the least important governor and take his place.

Planets inhabited primarily by Klingons and Cardassians may maintain whatever form of local government they choose and their governor allows. Most governors run relatively autocratic administrations, but some planets enjoy more democratic rule. A few governors have instituted truly bizarre forms of government. As long as the planet pays its taxes to the Regent regularly and the governor keeps the populace in line, the Alliance usually overlooks such deviance.

Planets in former Terran Empire territory, or whose populations do not contain a majority of Klingons or Cardassians, follow a different model. The Alliance installs and removes governors on such worlds at its whim, with the people receiving little or no voice in the matter. Typically the governor uses a standard Alliance system in which he divides the world into "states," installing a Commander at the top of each. Within his state the Commander possesses unfettered discretion to rule as he sees fit, subject only to the command of the Governor and other high-ranking Alliance officials.

Foreign Relations

The Klingon-Cardassian Alliance maintains foreign relations with relatively few other powers in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants. It typically considers diplomacy a complete waste of time. If the Alliance wants something, it takes it, regardless of the wishes of its target. Still, despite this attitude it has found that maintaining diplomatic contact with certain other powers can prove useful, if for no other reason than to provide a cover for espionage activities on those worlds.

The Romulan Star Empire

Since the conclusion of the Alliance-Romulan War over thirty years ago, the Alliance has maintained an embassy on Romulus, and the Star Empire on both Qo'noS and Cardassia Prime. For the most part, the two powers get along by ignoring each other—the Alliance doesn't build major bases or settlements too close to the Neutral Zone, and the Romulans respect Alliance space in the same fashion (no doubt preferring to concentrate their efforts on expansion away from enemy space). Romulan activity near the Neutral Zone increased during the Tholian War—probably in an effort to exploit the fact that the Alliance's attention was directed elsewhere—but since the war's end that activity has ebbed. In the post-war era the Alliance has stepped up its patrols of the Neutral Zone region to discourage any Romulan thoughts of invasion.

The Tholians

The treaty that concluded the Tholian War provided for both powers to build embassies and exchange ambassadors. So far, both of them have taken only preliminary steps toward fulfilling this proviso; neither has even chosen an ambassador. Each seems content to lick its wounds and glare at the other over a demilitarized zone. A few bold traders have tried to open up economic relations, but that process has also proven slow and problematic.

Klingon-Cardassian Relations

Perhaps the most important relations issue for the Alliance comes from within—the interaction between its two principle members, the Klingons and the Cardassians. As the incidents of the 2310s and 2320s show, distrust and prejudice continued to fester beneath the surface long after the two species formalized their association on paper. A series of mutual threats—the Romulans, the Tholians, the rebellion—combined with the success of their governmental venture, has brought the two species closer together than ever, and there seem to be no serious problems on the horizon. However, with two such haughty and temperamental species, differences can easily arise and explode into violence almost overnight.

In large part, credit for the stability of the Alliance rests with the Cardassian negotiators who helped to frame it nearly a century ago. Recognizing that most Klingons didn't care for the petty details of government (desiring only to rule and fight), the Cardassians agreed that only Klingons could sit on the throne as Regents; the Cardassians would employ their skills as administrators and organizers to keep the machinery of government flowing smoothly. This suited the Klingons well, as did the Cardassian proposal to run the Alliance's intelligence service.

These early Alliance institutions created an fascinating balance of power—essentially, the Klingons unwittingly handed government control over to the Cardassians. While Klingons still hold many of the most important positions, including the Regency and many military posts, *the Cardassians control the bureaucracy*. In the end, Regents and generals come and go, but the bureaucracy (with its vast institutional memory) remains in place, controlling and manipulating affairs behind the scenes. Cardassians hold positions of outright rule and command less frequently than Klingons, but they advise the Klingons, prepare the reports the Klingons read, and control all the petty details of daily government.

The Cardassians prefer to keep the true extent of their power a secret. Fortunately, Cardassians speak and flatter with great skill, allowing them to advise Klingon leaders in such a way as to make them think the ideas planted in their heads were their own. If worse comes to worst, the Klingon temperament and tendency toward impulsive, violent actions can be checked through bureaucratic manipulation—travel orders mysteriously misplaced, delayed shipments of fuel or crucial parts, "garbled" transmissions, and similar "accidents."

The extension of the Cardassian *vesala* system helps the Cardassians with their covert governmental work. Masters of influence-peddling since long before the Klingons, Bajorans, and other Alliance partners adopted *vesala,* the Cardassians can "call in favors" when necessary to keep the Klingons on a leash or direct their attention toward other, more important subjects.

Cardassian control of the Alliance intelligence apparatus also bolsters their secret control of the Alliance. Obsidian Order agents spy on all prominent Klingons, maintaining extensive dossiers for purposes of blackmail (and, if necessary, assassination). Reports from the Obsidian Order allow Intendant Dukat to manipulate many Klingon officials in subtle and indirect ways—most never even see the hand working their puppet strings.

Ultimately, Cardassian self-interest helps them maintain good relations with their Klingon allies. With the Klingons, they rule the Alpha Quadrant and substantial parts of the Beta Quadrant. Without them, they existed only as a second-rate galactic power, bullied by the Terran Empire. As long as they maintain the Alliance—and their secret control of it—they remain powerful.

LIFE IN THE ALLIANCE

An individual's quality of life in the Alliance depends on his species and station in life. Favored species enjoy luxuries and privileges; disfavored ones can only hope in vain for kindness and mercy from their overseers.

An Empire of Luxury

Klingons, Cardassians, Bajorans, and other Alliance member species live lives of luxury and ease (though Klingon "luxury" doesn't really fit Cardassian or Bajoran definitions of the term). Member species enjoy full use of replicators and other technological marvels, maintain slaves to serve their whims, and can travel as they please. No law punishes them for crimes committed against members of slave species, so they may abuse, rape, and torture them with impunity. Many a Cardassian and Bajoran has taken advantage of this fact to indulge their hedonism and perverted lusts. Special "galactic tours" carry favored citizens from one end of Alliance space to the other to see the sights and experience new, exotic pleasures.

Klingons, on the other hand, often use slaves for nothing more than live target practice. They have also established an extensive network of gladiatorial arenas where trained and untrained slaves fight for their lives against Klingon warriors, strange beasts, and each other. A successful gladiator may become a "star" and a valuable commodity in his own right, but in the end he's still nothing but a slave. Some in the Alliance criticize this practice, on the grounds that slaves should never receive combat training or weapons, but the Klingons seem confident that they have the institution under control. After all, cannot one Klingon warrior take on a dozen slaves at once and triumph?

An Empire of Misery

For disfavored persons, life in the Alliance fosters nothing but misery and despair. "Disfavoreds" include virtually all races that once belonged to the Terran Empire (though not its subject races, many of whom, like the Bajorans, joined the Alliance), along with any race conquered by the Alliance (such as the Ferengi). Terrans, Axanari, Vulcans, Andorians, Bolians, Betazoids, Tiburonians, Tellarites, and dozens of other species now feel the sting of the Alliance lash. Several, such as the Andorians and Tellarites, have been rendered virtually extinct due to their stubbornness and intractability; only a few hundred thousand of each species still exist. Other, even more difficult, species, such as the Tzenkethi and the Sheliak, were simply exterminated.

The Alliance normally presses disfavored species into slave labor. If there aren't enough slaves in one area—say, the Bajor Sector—Alliance "slave carriers" ship them there like cattle. Slaves enjoy no rights or legal protections whatsoever; they cannot fight back if struck or abused by members of favored races, travel freely, or own personal property of any kind. Torture or death punishes disobedience.

VISITORS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

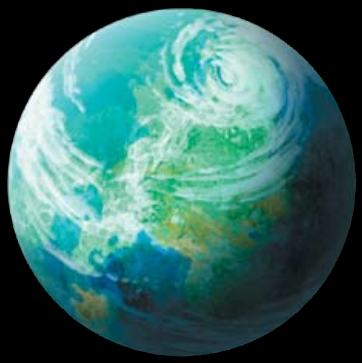
The Alliance authorities know all about Federation Kirk's visit to their universe, and the results of his "meddling." Hoping to avoid a similar fate themselves, they have established a strict policy regarding all "visitors": they execute them immediately. Most officials would obey this directive unquestioningly (after all, failure to do so would result in their own execution, if it was discovered), but some might try to exploit the arrival of "visitors" for their own benefit. In fact, Intendant Kira Nerys's attempt to do just that resulted in the creation of the Terran Rebellion (a fact she has kept well hidden). Furthermore, the Regent or other high-ranking Alliance officials might even try to make contact with the Federation Universe for their own gain—for example, to trick someone into bringing them cloaking technology or other devices that the Mirror Universe lacks.

The Alliance groups slaves into four categories, each with its own alphabetic designation. The slaves who perform the most menial and dangerous jobs—*Lambdas*—reside at the lowest level,. Slaves who do not obey quickly enough, who attempt to escape, who sneak extra food for themselves, or who commit other such infractions consistently consign themselves to this group. *Kappas* enjoy only a slightly better existence than Lambdas. They receive better food (and more of it), and work at less onerous jobs. *Iotas* continue the slave hierarchy, and in some cases even qualify for jobs as personal servants. Many of them work as vehicle drivers, though the vehicles possess special remote control devices which their overseers can use to prevent escapes. The most trusted slaves of all, *Thetas* work as personal servants or hold jobs that do not require constant oversight or supervision. They receive the best food and quarters available to the slave class.

A few members of disfavored species rise above the slave system to what's known as "privileged" status. In most cases these persons belong to families that, long ago, assisted the Alliance in its conquest of the Terran Empire—in short, their ancestors were traitors. They enjoy a range of privileges that other disfavoreds only dream about. They eat good food and have limited replicator access; some even have their own personal servants. They can travel, with some restrictions. They can attend universities and enter certain professions, such as the science fields. They cannot own property or run businesses, but they can hold important positions within businesses. They cannot hold government office. Naturally, disfavoreds who work as slaves despise them (though that doesn't prevent them from trying to curry such favor themselves).

WORLDS IN THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance includes over 500 major inhabited worlds, with hundreds of other colonies, frontier worlds, unsettled planets, and barren star systems within its space. Although Alliance influences have stamped out many differences among various species (particularly among their slave races), many others remain, making each world a unique and fascinating place. Cardassians, Bajorans, and other species so inclined take advantage of their privileged status to visit many of these planets, see their marvels, and experience all the pleasures they have to offer.



BAJOR

Home to the third most powerful species in the Alpha Quadrant, Bajor remains a veritable jewel in the heavens. Once a planet of misery and suffering, it has become a legendary paradise where its people live in ease and splendor.

Bajor possesses an extensive history. The Bajoran civilization arose approximately 30,000 years ago according to some records, and by 20,000 years ago had established most of the cultural institutions that remain prominent today. Aggressive, passionate, and often fierce, the Bajorans organized themselves into kingdoms and principalities based around powerful, popular rulers. These realms often fought each other for land, resources, or simply for the joy of fighting. Other Bajorans channeled their passions into art, creating a body of cultural works that most worlds can only envy.

Approximately 15,000 years ago, the first unification of Bajor occurred. A powerful young king, Tellan Jora, conquered each of his neighbors. Then he expanded outward, conquering kingdoms beyond his immediate region until he ruled first a continent, then two, and

finally the entire planet. Declaring himself Emperor Jora I, he founded what Bajoran historians now refer to as the First Empire.

The First Empire endured for 8,000 years. A succession of over a dozen dynasties ruled it during that time, for periods ranging from three millennia to less than three decades. Bajorans view this time as a golden age, with food plentiful and suffering nonexistent. Archaeological relics from the First Empire period—especially the first three thousand years—remain quite rare and valuable.

The First Empire finally crumbled due to neglect on the part of its rulers, who were more concerned with their harems and other personal pleasures than the duties of office. Powerful regional warlords began fighting for the pieces, the victors setting themselves up as localized kings or princes. This period of balkanization and constant strife lasted for a millennium before one of the kings, Kelmet Chonar, defeated his rivals and once again unified the planet. Scientific and technological advancements in many fields marked this period, the Second Empire. The emperors' feared secret police quashed dissent, forcing the aggressive Bajorans to channel their energy into work, sports, and art rather than warfare.

The Second Empire lasted until 2255, when the Terran Empire first discovered Bajor. The Bajorans had never paid much attention to the universe beyond their system, and so were unprepared for the might and brutality of the Empire. A year and 125 million dead Bajorans later, the defeated Bajorans became a colony of the Terran Empire. The Imperial Starfleet ravaged Bajor, establishing hundreds of mines and processing facilities from which to suck the planet's copious resources by means of Bajoran slave labor.

When the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance freed Bajor from its Imperial shackles, it immediately joined the Alliance and fought to destroy its former oppressors. Bajoran soldiers took delight at avenging their peoples' treatment at the hands of the Terrans and their allies. They desecrated the tomb of Elthur of Vulcan, their first colonial governor, and paraded the head of the last governor, a Human named Nathan Kwan, through the streets of Theladria, the Bajoran capital.

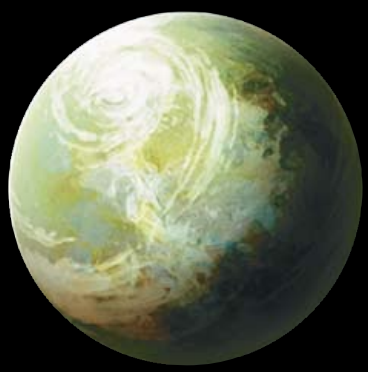
The Bajorans found that a place remained for slave labor—*Terran* slave labor—on their world. Slaves from the former Terran Empire arrived on Bajor to restore the planet they had once looted. Slave labor made ruined areas green and beautiful again, cleansed polluted rivers, and rebuilt fallen structures. All unsightly or dangerous work, such as ore processing, eventually moved off-world to orbital stations like Terok Nor.

Bajor Today

Today Bajor once again appears paradisiacal. Its people, freed from the need to work by replicator technology and slave labor, engage in whatever pastimes they desire—they create artwork, administer small businesses, pursue hobbies, or explore the realms of the senses and their own imaginations. Only the restrictions imposed by Alliance law limit their explorations.

Intendant Kira Nerys, who maintains her offices on space station Terok Nor, serves as the unquestioned ruler of the Bajor System. Although kind and generous to those she favors, the Intendant can be quite cruel to those she hates. Hundreds, if not thousands, of her "enemies" have gone to the torture chambers, the agony booths, or the scaffold—and she often considers anyone who denies her wishes an "enemy." While she professes to love her people, in truth she loves only herself, and will sacrifice anyone or anything to achieve her ambitions.

The Intendant knows many enemies, ranging from her First Officer, Garak, to members of the Bajoran Chamber of Ministers who supposedly "advise" her. In reality she virtually ignores the Chamber, which angers some of the ministers immensely. At least a dozen of them, if not more, would like to dispose of her and ascend to the position of intendant themselves.



CARDASSIA PRIME

Like their neighbors the Bajorans, the Cardassians have existed as an established civilization for millennia—in their case, for about 18,000 years. Their early civilizations, including the First and Second Hebitian Empires and various periods of internal warfare among lesser nations, lasted until about a thousand years ago. By that time, Cardassia Prime, never a resource-rich planet like Bajor or Earth, had been almost entirely stripped of its natural wealth, and desertification was taking over more and more arable land. Shortly after the magnitude of this problem became apparent, a military dictatorship took over the planet in the "Night of Talons," a ten-hour planetwide wave of assassinations targeting key governmental officials—when dawn came after this bloody night, the military assumed control.

Their situation grim, the leaders soon realized that they had to look outward, beyond their homeworld, to ensure Cardassia's survival. Unlike the Bajorans, who preferred to remain insulated on their homeworld, the Cardassians began exploring space as soon as it was technologically possible (about 750 years ago). After they developed warp capability, they began to search the heavens around them for other sources of raw materials and foodstuffs. They soon found dozens of other inhabited planets in the vicinity—planets ripe for conquest. Within a century the euphemistically-named Cardassian Union—actually a military dictatorship—formed. Dozens of "members" (puppet worlds) joined after Cardassia conquered them or gave them a choice between membership and obliteration. Members had to provide raw materials to Cardassia Prime to keep it functioning.

This period represented the first flowering of Cardassian civilization in thousands of years. Constant tribute from Union members freed Cardassia from the restrictions imposed by their world's resource scarcity, and the Cardassians began to create new structures, repair old ones, and heal some of the scars they'd left on their once-beloved homeworld. Following the lead of renowned architect Tavor Kell, the Cardassians established their now distinctive arch-and-dome style of architecture.

Cardassia's period of growth and expansion came to an abrupt and unwelcome halt in 2255, when the Union encountered the Terran Empire for the first time. Faced with a potential competitor, the Empire attacked, scoring several major victories (including the conquest of the valuable Bajor-B'hava'el System, which had been a "protected territory" of Cardassia but not a Union member). The Cardassians had never encountered so powerful a foe, or one possessed of such ruthless focus. Mobilizing quickly, they managed to get enough ships on the line to temporarily halt the Imperial advance into Cardassian territory.

The conflict eventually settled into a war of attrition. The Terrans mined Bajor, using its mineral wealth to construct new ships close to the front. Lacking the Empire's economic or technological resources, the Cardassians slowly gave ground on several fronts. Finally, in 2266, after several bitterly

contested battles, the Empire pushed the front back to the Badlands—only a few light-years from Cardassia Prime itself. Before the Empire could regroup and, in all likelihood, conquer the Cardassians, a major Klingon raid led by Kor diverted the Empire's forces and crippled its logistical capabilities.

The Cardassians sensed in the Klingons, a people they had heretofore ignored as "savage barbarians," the allies they needed to oppose the Terran Empire. They quickly sent an embassy to Qo'noS, proposing an alliance. Recognizing that the Terran Empire would crush each of them individually, the Klingons agreed, and the Alliance formed. Together their forces began to oppose the Terrans effectively, and eventually to push them back into their own territory. By 2305, Alliance forces had conquered and occupied the entire Terran Empire.

Cardassia Today

After the war ended, the Cardassians used treasures looted from the Empire and Terran slave labor to help remake Cardassia Prime. Repairing the ecological damage done by millennia of exploitation and neglect proved impossible, of course, but with the help of Terran science and labor the Cardassian engineers did what they could. Compared to the Cardassia of a hundred years before, it represented an extraordinary improvement. The Cardassian government moved industrial facilities off-planet or to other worlds, thus allowing the air and water to be cleansed; made replicators (once rare on Cardassia) commonplace; and established regular shipments of fresh food and nonreplicatable supplies from the former Empire worlds. Life on Cardassia became simpler and easier, though not too easy, for the Union would not have its people lose their strength through ease and indolence.

As of 2370, Legate Dukat serves as the Intendant of Cardassia Prime, and thus as the de facto leader of the Cardassian people throughout the Alliance. Tall, strong, and handsome, Dukat enjoys immense popularity among his people. That fact, coupled with his own cleverness and network of influence, has allowed him to remain in power for so long, since he has many enemies who seek to elevate themselves to his position through treachery. First among these is his chief aide, Legate Damar. An alcoholic and a sybarite, Damar embodies brutality and spite; he resents the fact that Dukat, and not he, rules Cardassia Prime. To his way of thinking, Dukat "cheated" him out of the intendant's job, and he intends to rectify that injustice at the point of a knife.

Legate Darhe'el, the Overseer Prime of Cardassia, also desires the intendancy. Charged with the importation, employment, and oversight of all slaves on Cardassia Prime, Darhe'el is a powerful man with one of the most extensive *vesala* networks in the Alliance. He burns with jealousy for Dukat's position, and plots to remove him from office. In the meantime, he relieves his frustrations by personally executing every slave caught attempting to escape his work assignments.

Finally, Legate Madred, one of the leaders of the Obsidian Order, moves in his shadowy circles to unseat the Intendant. He has ordered many of his operatives to gather information on Dukat, Dukat's minions and partisans, and anyone who might be competing for Dukat's job (such as Damar and Darhe'el). When the time appears right, he plans to use his assassin's training to strike without hesitation.

EARTH

A hundred years ago, Earth rested at the center of the feared Terran Empire, serving as its capital. A proud, powerful, decadent world where the strong prospered, the weak were exploited, and the clever grew rich, Earth's long shadow covered the entire Alpha Quadrant, and the Klingons, Cardassians, and Romulans all trembled before the might of the Imperial Starfleet.

But as powerful as it was, Earth fell victim to its own weakness. Altered by reforms instigated by Commander-in-Chief Spock toward the end of the 23rd century, it found itself unable to defend against the attacks of the powerful Klingon-Cardassian Alliance. By the beginning of the 24th century, the once-proud Terran homeworld lay in ruins, her people enslaved and brutalized.

Even the face of the planet changed during the awesome might of the Alliance campaign. A new island continent, East Africa, was created when Klingon planetary bombardment cracked open the geologic faultline running through the eastern part of Africa. Several existing islands, such as Ireland and New Zealand, were shattered into rubble and tiny islets. Alliance forces reduced the western half of North America to an uninhabitable desert. All of Earth's greatest structures and monuments—the Towers of Conquest, the Great Wall, the Faces of the Emperors, the Grand Canyon, the White Palace, Empire Plaza, and hundreds more—also met their destruction.

The Alliance set out to rebuild Earth as a gigantic labor camp and prison planet. Never again would it be allowed to achieve any measure of dignity, comfort, or power, except in the enclaves maintained in Kolara (the former city of Paris) by the Alliance overseers and officials. In the place of former cities, Earth's new masters constructed huge, hulking, ugly cities consisting of nothing but industrial plants, factories, and enormous slave dormitories. At the center of each city, regional governors erected enormous monuments celebrating Alliance victories and rule; edicts call for the execution of any Terran who fails to bow to one of these monuments.

Today, after 70 years of Alliance rule, Earth stands as a shadow of its former self. Mining projects have stripped away its mineral wealth with a thoroughness making the Terran operations on Bajor look slipshod. Alliance overseers ship "Earthers"—reduced to weak, sickly slaves— throughout the Alliance to perform the most dangerous and demeaning jobs. Hopelessness, despair, and misery hang over Earth's cities like a fog; pain shows in every step a Terran slave takes.

But even amidst this miasma of degradation, tiny rays of hope have begun to shine through the gloom. Recently an unidentified group detonated an explosive device at Alliance headquarters in Kolara, causing substantial damage to the installation and killing hundreds of Cardassians, Klingons,

and Bajorans. Word of the attack spread through the Terran dormitories, labor camps, and factories like wildfire. Some spoke of a new enemy for the Alliance, one with enough potential power to weaken it and free Humanity. But others, daring to hope, spoke of the possibility of rebellion. What if, they asked, some Terrans have finally found a way to build an underground resistance against their hated Alliance oppressors? If such a thing has happened, thousands, nay millions, of Terrans would rush to aid the rebellion—but as yet no one can prove the truth of the slaves' whispers.

Despite the near-total devastation of Earth, the fates of many cultural icons remain shrouded in mystery. When the Alliance conquered Earth, the reformed Empire was well underway in the creation of its latest cutting-edge designs in starships and technologies, complete with samples of a wide range of alien toxins, devices, and system maps. In some cases, these secret treasures were lost under the fierce Alliance bombardment. Certainly a bombing that broke up continents and created new seas was sufficient to destroy small, fragile samples of testbed technology. On the other hand, despite their best efforts, Alliance spies and special forces were unable to account for every missing piece. The sack of Imperial Starfleet headquarters showed that the Terrans had already taken precautions with their data—the computer systems, though heavily damaged, seemed to have been purged of all their information before the bombing commenced. Captured Imperial Starfleet officers claimed no knowledge of this data purge, but rumors spread among the Terran slaves of hidden backup archives, buried deep in the Earth's crust or sunk under its ocean beds. Every once in a while, a slave comes up with an inexplicable piece of equipment—anything from a food ration pack to an Imperial agonizer. While there may or may not be truth to the rumors of a rebellion network, nobody can deny that someone is spreading around bits and pieces of things uncovered from the past, perhaps taken from a concealed vault designed for just such an eventuality.

The Klingons survived the devastation of Qo'noS and its orbital bombardment, and eventually returned their planet to its former homeworld glory. Perhaps the Terrans will do the same someday with Earth—if they survive long enough to rise up against the Alliance. Some slaves barter with their overseers for better treatment by demonstrating "proof" that they are beaten, secretly hoping that the Alliance will eventually turn its ire against a different enemy and leave them under lax security. Others still sullenly (but secretly) plot the overthrow of their masters, having learned that subtlety must suffice where force is insufficient. In any case, Humanity has overcome a great many trials and tribulations in the past. This latest yoke seems to only strengthen the Human fire; in a strange paradox, the Alliance finds the quirky Humans even more determined to resist than ever. But, of course, the slaves will not be satisfied with mere freedom if they ever liberate their homeworld…

FERENGINAR

The Ferengi—best known as merchants, traders, gamblers, and thieves— compose the third major species within easy warp travel of Bajor. Short and weak compared to most humanoids, they have found that deceit and guile make better tools for them than skill at arms. In fact, according to their own historical texts, they first obtained warp capability not by inventing it, but by tricking some nameless alien explorer into selling it to them for a handful of semi-precious gemstones.

Ferenginar, the Ferengi homeworld, presents a dreary environment even by Alliance standards. Small, swampy, and humid, it boasts few large animals and little arable land. For this reason, trade and trade wars dominate the history of the Ferengi people. When a Ferengi wants something, he'll find a way to trade for it; if he can't trade for it, he'll try to steal it; if he can't steal it, he'll sneak up behind the owner, knife him in the back, and take it.

Galactic opinion regarding the Ferengi runs the gamut from mild dislike to utter loathing. To most species, including the Klingons (who often kill them on sight), the Ferengi are untrustworthy little weasels with whom one should have as few dealings as possible. Others, such as the Cardassians and Bajorans, disdain the Ferengi, but recognize that they hold some measure of value as snoops, fences, and black marketeers.

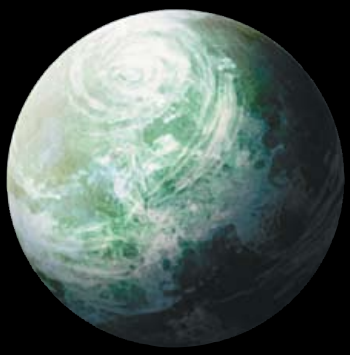
Because of the general Klingon reaction to their presence, Ferengi often try to avoid the core worlds of the Alliance. They prefer to remain on the fringes of Alliance space, where they can work their schemes and gouge their customers in relative safety. But a profitable enough venture can tempt a Ferengi to overcome his native cowardice and go just about anywhere.

The Terran Rebellion has taken note of the fact that in some places, such as Terok Nor, Ferengi have helped to smuggle escaped slaves out of Alliance space. Its leaders wonder if they can make widespread use of the Ferengi for such purposes; an "underground railroad" operation of this sort would help strengthen their young organization. Assuming the Rebellion can afford Ferengi services, such initiatives might help increase their ranks significantly.

GORLAN

The first official act performed by James T. Kirk when he became captain of the *I.S.S. Enterprise* in 2263 was the destruction of the planet Gorlan, which had rebelled against the rule of the Terran Empire. Only a few thousand Gorlans managed to escape their homeworld before the *Enterprise*'s weapons blasted its surface into rubble and glazed glass, and then cracked the planet open like an eggshell.

Today, a hundred years later, the Gorlan have become nomadic bands of pirate-fanatics, traveling the spacelanes in small groups to prey on Alliance shipping. Their religion unites them, teaching Gorlan superiority over all other galactic species; their sacred hymns speak of the Millennial Reign, a time fast approaching when the Gorlan will assume their rightful place as sovereigns atop the cosmic hierarchy. The long road to ultimate victory requires faith, however. According to the priest-captains who steer their ships, the hymns predicted that the Creator would send a "plague of destruction and fire" upon them to test them before they ascended to their rightful position as galactic rulers. They say that the destruction of their homeworld represents this "plague," and that they have now embarked on the final stages of their spiritual journey. For this reason, they refuse to settle peacefully on some distant, hidden world or to surrender when attacked; they believe it their sacred destiny to fight, pillage, and ultimately triumph over their Alliance enemies. Despite the best efforts of the Alliance Forces, they remain a distinct thorn in the Alliance's side.



QO'NOS

Qo'noS is the homeworld of the belligerent, militaristic Klingons. Though they have risen to lofty heights in the Alliance political structure, their past offers a decidedly less glorious image of this proud warrior species. The first several thousand years of Klingon history form an unrelenting chronicle of warfare, bloodshed, and rage unequalled in the Galaxy. In the face of such fury, some historians wonder how they came to develop advanced technology at all. The ancient Klingons fought over anything—land, power, women, insults real or perceived, or simply for the sheer joy of battle.

This joyous ferocity and singleminded bloodthirstiness impelled the Emperor Louvin to offer the Klingons a favored role in the Empire. It, along with the legendary Klingon bullheaded, stiff-necked, obstinacy prevented the Klingons from accepting it—or from accepting defeat until Qo'noS itself was leveled and the Klingons had become a race of refugees.

Fortunately for the Klingons, once they fled Qo'noS the Empire let them alone—until, that is, they began raiding frontier planets, starbases, and other settlements. Imperial efforts to wipe them out throughout the rest of the 23rd century proved fruitless; it seemed that for every Klingon raider killed, ten more stood ready to take his place harrying their despised conquerors.

Gradually, through a high birth rate and clever use of stolen military technology, the Klingons began to grow more and more powerful. Beginning around 2270, the Terran Empire initiated a concerted effort to destroy them, and nearly succeeded on several occasions. The Klingons struck back with raids deep into Empire space. Their hit-and-run tactics gave a breather to the beleaguered Cardassians, and the two groups soon formed an alliance.

Now able to oppose the Empire on a substantially more equal footing due to strength of numbers, the fledgling Alliance slowly pushed back the forces of the Empire over the next several decades. Internal dissent among the Imperial elite, coupled with radical reform proposals, began to weaken the aging Empire. Ultimately, the Alliance fleet flew unchallenged over a shattered, defeated Earth.

Qo'noS Today

Since the conquest, the Klingons have reoccupied Qo'noS and built many large, impressive cities (including their capital, First City). With the wealth of the quadrants at their feet, they have gradually molded their home planet into a darkly majestic fortress-world—the mere mention of Qo'noS strikes fear into the hearts of Alliance subjects throughout the quadrant.

Gowron, Intendant of the Qo'noS System, rules the Klingon people. In many ways he represents an unusual choice for intendant. Unlike Regent Worf, who fits the stereotype of the large, brutal Klingon warrior perfectly, Gowron relies more on cleverness and subtlety. His enemies can never be certain whether he'll challenge them to single combat, find a way to blackmail them into supporting him, or simply send an assassin to plant a *kut'luch* between their ribs.

Gowron enjoys the support and favor of most of the Houses on the High Council. The Duras Sisters, Lursa and B'Etor, form perhaps his strongest allies—their timely withdrawal from the fleets of their brother Duras became one of the decisive factors in Gowron's victory in the recent Klingon civil war. Rumors on Qo'noS whisper that Gowron conducts affairs with both sisters, and it's well known that he uses them as enforcers from time to time. When the mighty Duras fleets appear in a system, everyone knows that some soon-to-be-dead Klingon has offended the Intendant.

Still, despite Gowron's power, the threat of civil war remains omnipresent on Qo'noS. Such wars have been part of Klingon culture throughout history, and all it would take to start another one is some House's perception of a weakness on Gowron's part. Gowron keeps a close eye on ally and enemy alike, and hides his secrets carefully.

VULCAN

Like Earth, the Alliance conquered Vulcan after extensive bombardment, and much of Vulcan's scant supply of water boiled away into the atmosphere under the heat of Klingon disruptors. Today Vulcan burns more sere than ever, a wasteland even by the standards of the planet-ravaging Cardassians. Its harsh and unforgiving environment makes it the perfect prison planet for the Alliance.

Whenever the Alliance catches a member of the Terran Rebellion, a criminal, a pirate, a dissident, or some other malcontent, it must decide whether execution or imprisonment serves as the most appropriate punishment. Out of cruel "mercy," a prisoner may end up on Vulcan, his life spared, though perhaps only temporarily. On Vulcan daily survival becomes a fragile hope at best. With very little water to go around and a large population, a person can easily die of thirst within a week as his body tries to adapt to its new environment.

In the back alleys of the few Vulcan cities which the Alliance left standing, prisoners and Vulcans alike knife each other to death for cupfuls of water. Some have ghoulishly taken to killing people and drinking their blood for the moisture. Literally and figuratively, it is a hell-world.

Despite the harsh conditions, many Vulcans chose to remain on their homeworld after the conquest. They are well adapted to its environment and have an easier time surviving there than, say, Terrans or Tiburonians. Vulcans run most of the criminal gangs who control the planet's population (the Alliance has never bothered to station wardens there; it simply monitors the planet to make sure no one can escape).

WORLDS OUTSIDE THE ALLIANCE

For one reason or another, the Alliance has not conquered every world in the Alpha Quadrant. While it may influence those worlds in some way, it does not rule them. Some of the worlds outside its direct control include:

Breen

The icy Breen homeworld belongs to the enigmatic Breen people. Rabidly xenophobic, they want little to do with the Galaxy beyond their own system. On those rare occasions when they do interact with other sentient species, they wear refrigerated suits that cover them from head to toe. No non-Breen has ever seen what a Breen actually looks like.

The Breen can maintain their isolation, and keep the Alliance at bay, because they possess a significant military capability. The Klingons have tried to conquer them three times during their history, and failed every time. Fielding large ships and equipped with strong shields and powerful disruptors, modern Breen warships also possess an energy-dissipation device against which Alliance ships have no defense. The Alliance would desperately like to learn more about the Breen (particularly about their military technology), and would pay handsomely for concrete information.

Minos

Like the Breen, the Minosians have remained free from Alliance domination thanks to their superior firepower. The foremost weaponsmiths in the Alpha Quadrant, the Minos possesses a planetary defense network that even the *Negh'Var* cannot penetrate. However, the Minosians have established a profitable relationship with the Alliance as a supplier of weaponry and defensive systems. While they certainly won't sell their most powerful systems to the Alliance (since they use those for their own protection), they provide the Cardassians and Klingons which just about any other type of weapon they desire. Sometimes they trade weapons for shipments of slaves for use in weapons testing.

Risa

Although located within Alliance space, Risa has managed to maintain its independence through adroit political manipulation, bribery, and treachery. The Risan leaders mastered the Cardassian *vesala* system long ago, and use it to keep the Alliance from installing an intendant to rule them. Those officials whom the Risans cannot bribe, it hires Flaxian assassins to eliminate.

In exchange for favors granted, the Risans offer a powerful attraction of their own: the use of their luxurious pleasure planet. Labeled, with some accuracy, "the Most Decadent Planet in the Galaxy," Risa caters to the boundless Humanoid desire for pleasure in all of its forms. Alliance citizens travel many light-years to sample its exotic liqueurs, swim in its crystal-clear oceans, gamble in its enormous casinos, and avail themselves of the "services" provided by countless harems of exquisitely trained sex-slaves. Whatever a person desires, from sporting events to murder-for-thrills, the Risans can provide.

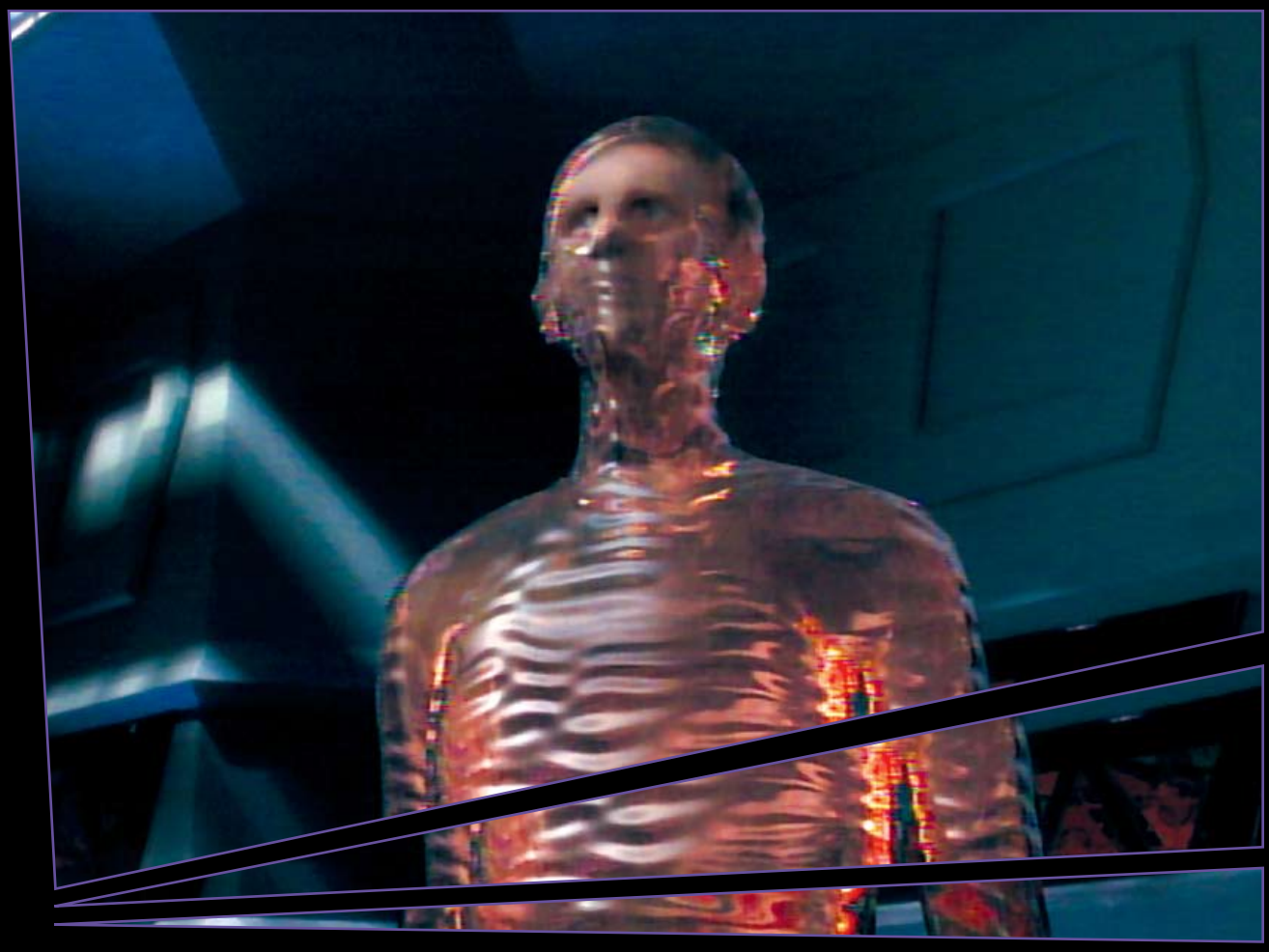
The Mirror Dominion

In the Mirror Universe, there are no Orbs, no Prophets—and no wormhole to the Gamma Quadrant. No wormhole means no contact with the Dominion, and no Dominion War. Narrators who want to run a Mirror Dominion War can easily alter the facts to suit their desires.

Just because no one in the Mirror Universe has *discovered* the Bajoran Wormhole doesn't mean it's not *there*. When Major Kira and Dr. Bashir accidentally traveled to the Mirror Universe, they came through the wormhole, and left via the same route. It didn't look quite the same as the Bajoran Wormhole known in the Federation Universe (it opened slightly differently) but it functioned identically. Assuming that a Mirror Universe ship entered the wormhole properly, it's entirely possible that it would find itself in the Gamma Quadrant—with the Dominion.

While the Federation Universe Dominion stands as a powerful, ruthless political entity, the Mirror Universe Dominion takes this power to even more terrible heights. Its Jem'Hadar are bigger, stronger, tougher, and even more suicidally devoted to their masters. Its Vorta are wilier and more vicious, often with enhanced telekinetic abilities to make them excellent assassins as well as diplomats. Its Founders have no compunctions about ordering the extermination of entire planetary populations. For example, in the Mirror Universe, the Dominion didn't bother to inflict the "blight" on the people of the Teplan system; instead, it used a different biogenic weapon, killing the entire population in less than two weeks. Then they cracked open the planet, took its mineral wealth, and left it to drift through space as a mute testament to the Dominion's power and brutality.

An encounter between the Alliance and the Dominion would inevitably lead to war. Both powers are large, aggressive, expansionistic states that don't hesitate to conduct foreign relations at disruptor point. However, the Alliance would likely fare better in its Dominion War than did the Federation-Klingon-Romulan alliance in the Federation Universe, for several reasons. First, the Alliance is larger and more powerful than the Federation and its allies. Second, since the Alliance includes the Cardassians, the Dominion would have no Alpha Quadrant allies to assist it (unless it somehow convinced the Breen, Tholians, or



Romulans to work with it, which is unlikely). Third, the Alliance is much more militarized and aggressive than the Federation and its allies, who had to conduct their Dominion War according to their ideas of fair play. Of course, the Dominion is more powerful and aggressive, too, so it wouldn't be an easy fight for either side. Characters in a Terran Rebellion series could certainly exploit a war situation to make gains in their quest for independence. Perhaps *they* would ally with the Dominion, paving the way for a future Dominion that included the Terrans—at least until they decided to kill their Founder masters and seize power for themselves.

The Mirror Borg

Outside of the enigmatic claims of Orion mystics, no Q exist in the Mirror Universe—or at least, they've never chosen to reveal themselves to anyone there. Without a Q to bedevil some Alliance Forces captain, no Alliance ship will get thrown into the Delta Quadrant for a first encounter with the Borg. Without that encounter, the Borg will never learn about the Alliance or the many races that live within its territory. Thus, no Wolf 359, no Borg attempt to use a timesphere to stop the Terran Empire from developing warp drive, and no threat of "assimilation." At least not unless the Narrator decides that he wants to use the Borg in his Mirror Universe series.

Getting the Mirror Universe Borg involved with affairs in the Alpha Quadrant shouldn't prove too difficult. A clever Narrator can come up with many ways to bring the Borg to the Alliance, or an Alliance ship to the Borg. First, there's the same method used in the Federation Universe—an ultra-powerful being or beings who brings the two together. If you don't want to use Q, there's the Douwd, the Cytherians, or many other such beings. In the Mirror Universe, such beings enjoy not only immense power—they also use their power capriciously, often with malicious intent. If it pleased them to do so, they'd arrange an Alliance-Borg encounter just for the fun of seeing what sort of suffering resulted.

Second, there's that old *Star Trek* standby, the technological accident. A Borg transwarp drive set on overload, or an Alliance ship that somehow manages to generate energies like those of the Traveler, or the early invention of the quantum slipstream drive by an enterprising Alliance scientist—any of these possibilities could easily bring the two powers together, with predictably disastrous results.

Third, you can alter history a little. Since this is the Mirror Universe, not everything has to be *exactly* alike. Maybe the Borg started an expedition to the Alpha Quadrant decades or centuries ago—and the first wave is just now arriving.

Mirror Universe Borg are even worse than their Federation Universe counterparts. They possess the same hive mind, the same techniques of assimilation, the same superior technology—but the resemblance ends there. Where the Federation Borg are zombie-like automatons, Mirror Borg are more proactively aggressive. Any time they sense an intruder aboard one of their ships, they attack with every resource at their command—they won't ignore an unknown invader just because he's "not interfering" with them. They're also much quicker than Federation Borg. Thanks to developments in Borg nanoprobes and other technologies, Mirror Borg lack the stiff-legged gait and awkward motion of Federation Borg. With their skeleton and musculature enhanced by Borg technology, they move very quickly. Drawing a bead on them with a disruptor, or avoiding their hand-to-hand attacks, often becomes an impossible exercise. Their cubes are larger, as well—10 kilometers on a side, or more—and equipped with incredibly powerful weapons capable of destroying a *Vor'cha*-class ship with a single blast. In short, it would take every resource at the Alliance's command to prevent the Borg from assimilating every being within its territory. Perhaps only a new, improved Tantalus Field would save the day....

THE TERRAN REBELLION

No one understands Alliance oppression better than the former citizens of the Terran Empire, whom the Alliance reduced to a slave species. For decades, the Alliance rooted out and crushed even the faintest hints of resistance or rebellion. Alliance forces and agents brutally executed any Terran, Vulcan, or other slave species who showed the slightest inclination to disobey orders or plot treason.

But not even the Alliance could crush the hopes of Humanity. Throughout their former Empire, Terrans dreamed of a day when they could cast off their Alliance shackles and deliver vengeance against their hated masters. At long last, nearly a century after the Alliance first conquered them, their dreams at least appear within reach.

It all began with a man named O'Brien.

A History of the Rebellion

Miles O'Brien, known to some as "Smiley," was a Terran Theta-class slave working on the space station Terok Nor. A skilled technician, O'Brien bore the responsibility for maintaining and repairing the station's equipment.

In 2370, O'Brien met a Terran named Julian Bashir. Bashir claimed to have come to Terok Nor from another universe, one in which he was a doctor and the Miles O'Brien he knew served as chief of operations for the entire space station, a respected man with a family and friends who loved him. O'Brien, at first skeptical, nevertheless felt a seed of hope and longing blossom within him. The thought of being a respected, powerful person intoxicated him, and against his better judgment he began to believe Bashir's claims. When Bashir finally found a way to return to his own universe, he agreed to O'Brien's request to take him along.

As the two were going to join Bashir's companion from the other universe, Major Kira Nerys, Alliance forces captured them. All seemed doomed until another Terran working for the Alliance, pirate captain Ben Sisko, who'd become increasingly frustrated with his lot in life after talking with Kira, turned on his Alliance superiors. O'Brien ultimately decided to remain behind with Sisko to help free his people from their Alliance shackles.

Early Successes and Troubles

O'Brien's rebels retreated to the Badlands, a region of space near Terok Nor where Alliance ships could not track them. From there they began to launch raids against Alliance targets, stealing equipment and destroying enemy assets. Slaves on other worlds, such as Earth and Andoria, heard rumors of their success and started rebel groups of their own. Unfortunately, this caused the Alliance to retaliate by further oppressing the Terrans and their former allies.

Furthermore, the Alliance turned its best tactical and scientific minds to the task of tracking down and eliminating O'Brien's rebel cell. In 2371, Terran scientist Jennifer Sisko, estranged wife of rebel Ben Sisko and daughter of one of Earth's "privileged" families, began to develop a transpectral sensor array. This sensor would work even in the Badlands. Realizing that this could spell the end of the rebellion, O'Brien planned to have Ben Sisko convince her to abandon her work and join the rebellion. But when an Alliance warship destroyed Sisko's vessel, killing him and his entire crew, O'Brien's plan hit a snag.

Smiley found a simple solution: using his technological prowess, he rigged a transporter to take him to the Federation Universe, where he kidnapped Captain Benjamin Sisko of space station Deep Space Nine and took him back to the Mirror Universe. There he explained the situation and elicited Benjamin Sisko's help. While not pleased about this turn of events, Sisko recognized O'Brien's need and agreed to help him. Temporarily assuming the mantle of leadership of the rebellion, he convinced everyone, even Ben Sisko's lover Jadzia Dax, that he was the Mirror Sisko and had miraculously escaped the destruction of his ship. He established contact with Jennifer Sisko and, eventually, persuaded her to join the rebellion instead of exposing it with her transpectral sensor. His mission accomplished, a grateful O'Brien returned him to his own universe and the rebellion continued.

Heartened by continuing reports of successes in the Bajor Sector and elsewhere, rebel cells on many former Terran Empire worlds recruited more followers and began expanding their operations. Many of them paid the price for their members' lack of experience and blind hopefulness when the Alliance tracked them down, butchered their members, and then publicly executed the members' families. But the luckier or more experienced cells, such as those on Earth, Betazed, Andoria, and Bolarus IX, escaped the hangman's noose and kept on fighting.

The Capture of Terok Nor

Despite the Alliance's best efforts, it proved unable to stamp out the rebellion; the pockets of resistance continued to grow and rebel attacks occurred with greater frequency. By late 2371 O'Brien's group had become large and powerful enough to mount an attack on Terok Nor itself. Thanks to his in-depth knowledge of the station's systems, his forces triumphed despite the odds against them. They captured Intendant Kira and imprisoned her in the station's brig; only First Officer Garak escaped the disaster.

Determined not to let the rebels enjoy their victory for long, Regent Worf headed for Terok Nor aboard his enormous flagship, the *Negh'Var*. Knowing that the rebels and the station were in no shape to resist an attack by the *Negh'Var* and its support fleet, O'Brien sought a way to even the playing field. His solution, based upon analysis of data obtained from computers on Deep Space 9 during his visit there earlier in the year, was to build a version of the *Defiant* for use against the Alliance. Unfortunately, he didn't have time to perfect the vessel; only someone intimately familiar with the *Defiant* could help him. That meant working with Benjamin Sisko again.

To ensure that he could obtain Benjamin Sisko's willing cooperation, O'Brien arranged to send Jennifer Sisko to the Federation Universe. Having learned from their previous encounter that Benjamin Sisko's Jennifer had been killed, he felt that she might be able to convince him to help the rebels. Upon finding out how much Benjamin Sisko's son, Jake, missed his mother, Jennifer Sisko tempted the young man into visiting the Mirror Universe, where he was, in essence, held hostage to ensure that his father would work with the rebels. Furious over the scheme, but recognizing the rebels' need, Benjamin Sisko helped to prepare the Mirror *Defiant* for battle. When the time came, he even piloted it against the *Negh'Var,* and demonstrated how a skilled and clever captain with the right ship could take on even an opponent like the Alliance flagship and inflict tremendous damage. Thanks to Benjamin Sisko's heroic efforts, the rebels retained control of Terok Nor.

Sadly, a single failure tainted their victory: the escape of the Intendant. With some help from Nog, the proprietor of Nog's Bar on Terok Nor, whom she later killed, Intendant Kira managed to flee the station. During her escape she encountered and killed Jennifer Sisko. She spared Jake Sisko, claiming that this action meant Benjamin Sisko would owe her a favor.

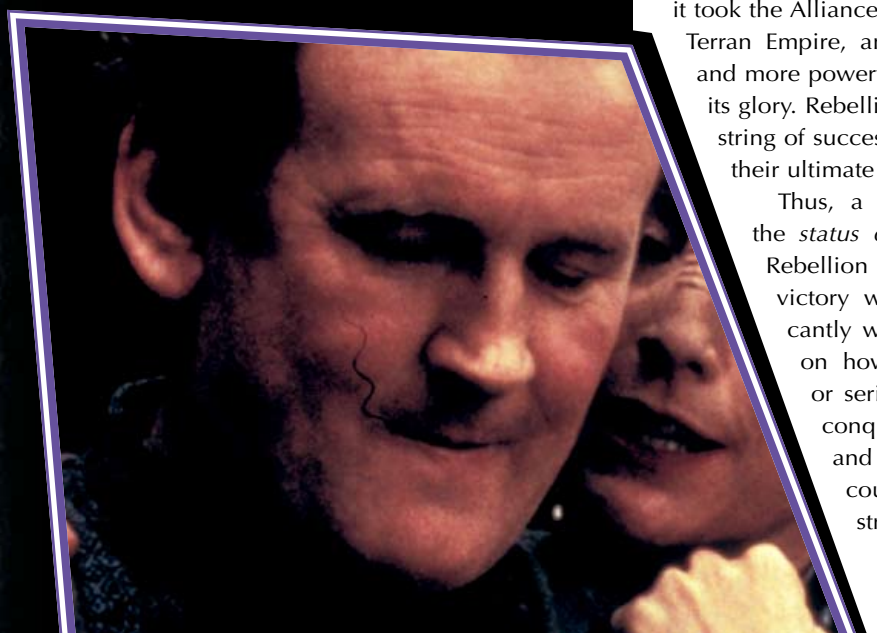
A Crumbling Alliance?

From 2372 until 2375, the Alliance continued to suffer from Rebellion raids and terrorist activities. During this period the disparate rebel groups solidified their early, crude contacts, forming genuine links allowing them to coordinate their activities and plan grand strategies. In short, they began to function less like isolated groups of guerrillas and more like an actual military force.

In late 2373, the Rebellion fought its first pitched battle against Alliance forces near the Valo System. Nearly a hundred rebel ships, many of them captured from the Alliance fleets, faced almost twice as many Alliance vessels, many of them powerful *Vor'cha*-class cruisers. Thanks to the overconfidence of the Alliance commander (Gul Evek), clever intelligence gathering, and not a little bit of luck, Rebellion forces scored a stunning victory. The outcome reportedly so angered the Regent that he threw Gul Evek out of a two-kilometer-high window and ordered his entire crew butchered by the *Yan-Isleth*.

Its success at Valo infused new life into the Rebellion. Rebel forces captured several dozen ships, giving them a greater military capability than they'd ever enjoyed before. Miles O'Brien generously distributed many of these ships to rebels on Earth, Betazed, and other regions outside the Bajor Sector. Throughout the Alliance, slaves tried to escape to join the Rebellion. While Alliance forces captured and executed most of them, the threat of punishment didn't deter others from trying, for they could see a light at the end of the tunnel for the first time in their lives.

The continued existence of the Rebellion caused problems at the highest levels of the Alliance government. Regent Worf insisted upon an explanation, and every military official scrambled to place the blame on someone else. Once again, racial rifts began to appear between Cardassian and Klingon, with each muttering that the other was really to blame for the losses.



The Regent's New Cloak

In 2375, Regent Worf, acting on a suggestion from the now restored Intendant Kira, hatched a plan to obtain a Federation Universe technology unknown in the Mirror Universe: a cloaking device. He kidnapped the Federation Universe's Grand Nagus and, through the Intendant's lover, the unjoined Trill Ezri Tigan, arranged for Federation Quark and Federation Rom to steal a cloaking device. Ezri and her patsies succeeded, bringing the cloaking device to the *Negh'Var*. Quark and Rom were imprisoned.

Unfortunately, no one on the *Negh'Var* knew enough about cloaking technology to get the device to work. Reluctantly, they turned to Rom, who properly installed the device—but made a few modifications of his own. The cloak worked, allowing the *Negh'Var* to get behind the Rebellion's *Defiant* and prepare an ambush. But when it dropped the cloak, Rom's modifications activated—crippling every system on the ship! Helpless, Rebellion forces captured the *Negh'Var* and the Regent himself. (During the battle, Ezri killed First Officer Garak with an alcartic virus, allowing Quark and Rom to return home; the Intendant managed to escape the ship before it was captured.) The Regent was imprisoned on Terok Nor, and the *Negh'Var* became the Rebellion's flagship. Ezri, a former space pirate and smuggler with few scruples and a passion only for monetary compensation, recognized the evil of the Alliance and joined the Rebellion.

Whither Now?

The progress of the Rebellion from 2375 depends on the Narrator. Many possibilities present themselves; while the Rebellion has enjoyed steady success for several years, the Alliance remains powerful and could easily regroup and inflict some defeats on the upstart Terrans. Some of the possibilities include:

Rebellion Triumphant

The Rebellion still has a long way to go. After all, it took the Alliance decades of fighting to conquer the Terran Empire, and the Alliance has grown bigger and more powerful than the Empire at the height of its glory. Rebellion leaders will have to repeat their string of successes again and again to accomplish their ultimate goal.

Thus, a Narrator who wants to maintain the *status quo* can easily do so. The Terran Rebellion can continue to score victory after victory without destroying or even significantly weakening the Alliance. Depending on how the Narrator wants an episode or series to play out, the Rebellion may conquer a substantial region of space and set up its own government, or they could remain in their current cell structure and just keep fighting the

good fight in isolated groups. The battle may go back and forth, with the Rebellion gaining occasionally, and losing occasionally. But the basic facts of the Alliance's strength and the Rebellion's existence won't change. No doubt Intendant Kira will launch another plot to bring herself back to power....

Alliance Counterstrike

Despite its victory, it remains a dark time for the Terran Rebellion. Capturing the Regent and the *Negh'Var* does not a successful revolution make. The wily Gowron declares Worf dead and steps into his place, becoming the ruler of the Alliance. Somehow, Intendant Kira manages to curry favor with him and win a place at his court, where she continues to search for ways to destroy the Rebellion and regain her rulership of Bajor. Lursa and B'Etor become the most powerful military commanders in the Alliance Forces, tasked by Gowron with crushing the Rebellion once and for all.

Where the Duras Sisters start their job depends on the Narrator's desires. For an episode or series based in or around the Bajor Sector, they'll likely go after Terok Nor and the *Negh'Var*. For other series, an attack on Jean-Luc Picard's Maquis resistance on Earth, Deanna Troi's Betazoid terrorists, or any one of a dozen other significant rebel groups may be the most dramatic story to tell. The Duras Sisters aren't fools. They know they have to show results, so they'll pick at least a couple of targets they feel confident they can capture. Only after making and consolidating some gains will they turn their attention to the bigger fish. Alternately, they may obtain a new super-weapon from the Federation Universe, the Minosians, or some other source, forcing the Rebellion to send a strike team (no doubt including some Federation Universe members!) to capture or destroy it.

Reign of Chaos

The rebel victories may prove too much for the Alliance to bear. Suffering from significant military defeats, a loss of prestige, diminished morale, and increasing racial tension, the Alliance splits apart. Cardassian turns on Klingon; local warlords set themselves up as "emperors" ruling over a system or three; trade routes break down. In essence, the Rebellion has won, since the Alliance no longer exists and cannot devote any attention to recapturing Terok Nor, Earth, or any other territory now held by the rebels. But this thrusts the characters into a very dangerous situation. Where once they had a single foe to fight, now they have dozens—not to mention other powers such as the Romulans and Tholians, who could sweep in and conquer a lot of territory in the absence of organized opposition. The characters must find a way to hold on to their new power.

Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss

In this outcome, the Rebellion triumphs. Maybe it does so shortly after capturing the Regent (which causes the Alliance to disintegrate, as above, but somehow allows the rebels to pick up the pieces and establish their own quadrant-spanning government). Maybe it takes several years longer. In either event, the Terrans finally have what they've dreamed of for so long—a government of Terrans, by Terrans, for Terrans.

What goes around, comes around, however. Now that the Terrans have regained control, they don't intend ever to lose their power again. They begin a systematic, methodical program of exterminating the Cardassians, Bajorans, Klingons, and all other members of the former Alliance. Perhaps they spare some unfortunates for slave labor, but the rest are killed out of hand—the Terrans know full well that slaves can overthrow their masters, and they don't intend to leave enough of their former enemies alive to make a rebellion possible.

Characters from the Federation Universe will now find that the shoe's on the other foot. They've got to stop the *Terrans* and help the *Cardassians and Klingons* rebel against their masters! The folly here, of course, is that it's in the nature of Mirror Universe characters and governments to kill, torture, enslave, and brutalize. Federation Universe characters who hope to get all the different Mirror Universe species to co-exist peacefully are doomed to disappointment.

The Green Menace

The Alliance's enemies from earlier this century, the Romulans, may view the success of the Rebellion to date as an opportunity for the Star Empire to increase its own power. They have several options. In traditional Romulan fashion, they can covertly aid the Rebellion in exchange for future favors and obligations. Since they're smart enough not to trust the leaders of the Rebellion to keep their bargains, that's an unlikely option at best. But they may aid the Rebellion for a little while under pretenses of friendship, hoping to weaken the Alliance further.

Another possibility exists—the Romulans could take advantage of the Alliance's weakness and losses to launch their own attack. If the Alliance were forced to fight a war on two fronts, it might quickly crumble. At the very least, the Rebellion could only hope to gain from a Romulan invasion—though it might end up having to face a newly-powerful Star Empire after it defeats the Alliance....

REBELLION ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

While its genesis lay not with overarching military commands, but rather with simple groups of freedom fighters, the Rebellion has gradually evolved into a more sophisticated organization, with appropriate administrative structures and hierarchies. Of course, the group's nature, purpose, goals, and origins heavily influence its form of organization and chain of command.

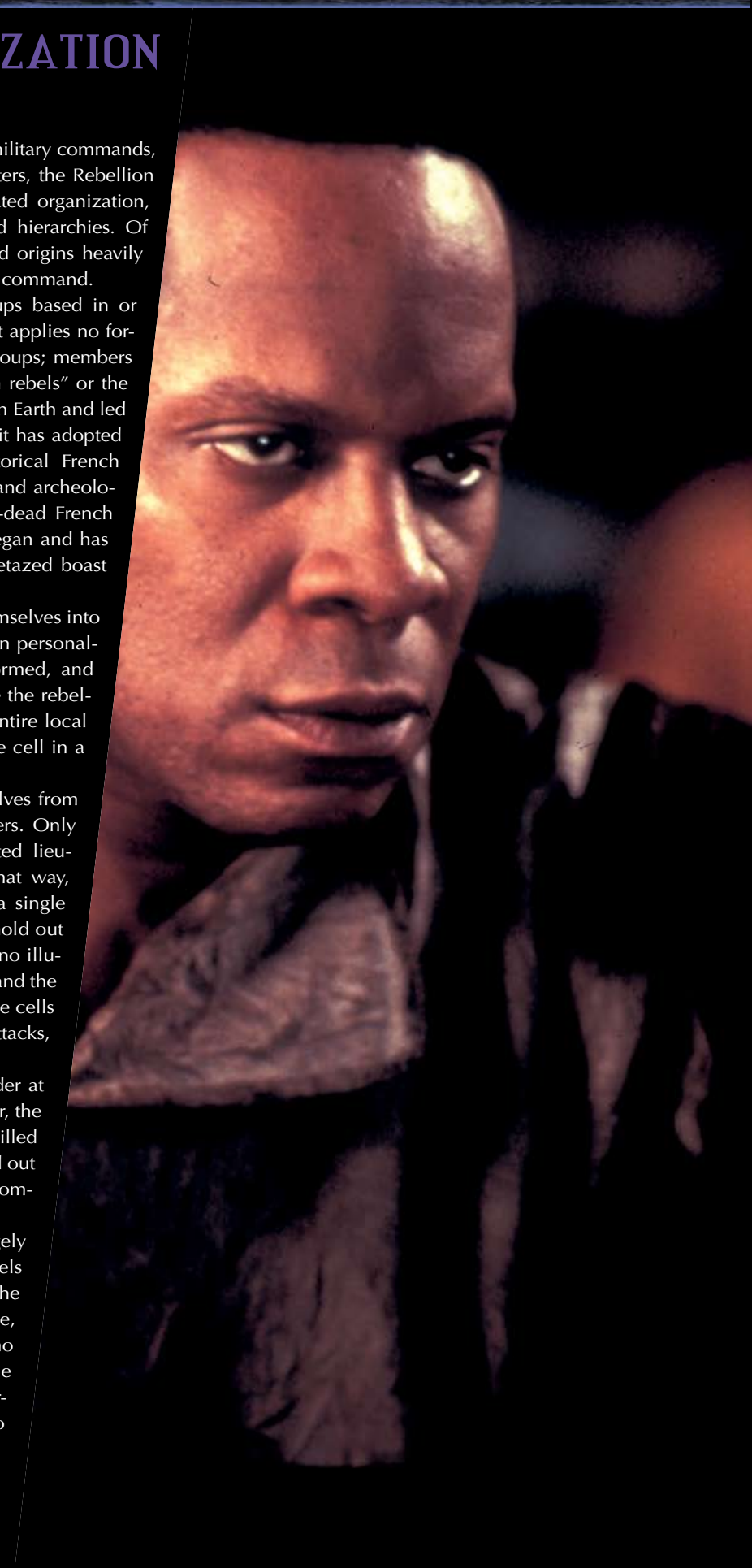
The Rebellion divides its forces into groups based in or around a particular planet, system, or sector. It applies no formal title, such as "army" or "fleet," to such groups; members of the Rebellion simply refer to the "Andorian rebels" or the "Betazed group." The resistance group based on Earth and led by Jean-Luc Picard forms the lone exception; it has adopted the title of "Maquis" from an obscure historical French rebel group (Picard, being a skilled historian and archeologist, chose the name to honor his own now-dead French heritage). Bajor Sector (where the rebellion began and has achieved its greatest successes), Earth, and Betazed boast the largest and most organized groups.

Within a given group, the rebels divide themselves into "cells" of three to ten persons depending upon personality compatibility, the types of missions performed, and the orders of their superiors. In systems where the rebellion hasn't yet gained a strong foothold, the entire local group of rebels may be no larger than a single cell in a more extensive group.

Members of a cell typically isolate themselves from all other cells by order from their commanders. Only the cell's leader, and perhaps his most trusted lieutenant, knows how to contact other cells. That way, captured resistance fighters can only betray a single cell to the Alliance (while some rebels might hold out under Alliance torture, the rebel leaders have no illusions about the average rebel's ability to withstand the tender mercies of the Obsidian Order). Multiple cells work together only for truly large missions or attacks, such as the retaking of Terok Nor.

Cell leaders must contact their group's leader at least once a week. If this contact does not occur, the group leader assumes the cell leader has been killed and covertly makes contact with the cell to find out what's going on and, if necessary, re-establish communications.

Leadership of a group or cell depends largely on popular support—who do the local rebels think would make the best leader? Who's the strongest or cleverest among them? Of course, this being the Mirror Universe, any rebel who thinks he can do a better job can try to assume leadership of a group or cell by killing the current leader. Only a leader powerful enough to hold the job on his own deserves to keep it.



Rebellion Factions

While all resistance groups possess the same ultimate goal—the overthrow and destruction of the Alliance—the Terran rebels have many different reasons for wanting to achieve that goal. This has caused various factions to arise among the rebels; within a group or cell you may have two or three different factions of rebels whose outlook on the Rebellion influences the types of missions they want to perform. Fighters don't care much about the odds of victory, for example, and may call for a battle or raid even when it's not tactically sound to do so; Avengers don't worry about the long-term goals of the Restorationists or Reformers. The rebel factions include:

Anarchists

Anarchist rebels don't really care about freedom for Terrans or other high and mighty goals. They just want the personal freedom to do as they please, and hang everyone else. They undertake as few missions as possible (they'd rather not get killed) and always argue against any risky or dangerous actions. If they can carve out a region of space where the Rebellion has full control and the Alliance cannot penetrate, that's sufficient for them.

Avengers

The Avenger faction wants to make every single Alliance sympathizer pay for the decades of suffering and misery they've inflicted upon Terrans. To the Avengers, the Rebellion's main purpose is to kill, maim, and torture as many members of those species as possible. Gaining territory and scoring military victories remain important only insofar as they allow the bloodletting to continue unabated. Members of this faction don't care whether the Rebellion ever restores the Terran Empire; they just want to see the quadrant run lavender with Klingon blood. Most of them would be happy to sell their lives for the chance to drag a few dozen of the enemy down with them. Members of other factions typically regard them as loose cannons requiring close observation; only the Fighters truly seem to appreciate their "attitude."

Fighters

Fighters aren't really interested in overthrowing the Alliance; they just enjoy a good fight. They've signed on with the Rebellion because it represents the underdog and they'll have plenty of opportunity to conduct raids and battles against the Alliance. Former pirate captain Ben Sisko embodied the fighter ethos; while he disliked the way the Alliance treated him, when it came right down to it he just liked taking on the bigger guy and bloodying his nose from time to time.

Reformers

This faction, epitomized by the originator of the Rebellion, "Smiley" O'Brien, holds an unusually beneficent view of the revolution. They don't want to re-establish the Terran Empire or any other government that enslaves and tyrannizes people. They only want to free the Alliance's oppressed peoples and then create their own, more enlightened, government where everyone remains at liberty and has a voice. Many former criminals and pirates like Ezri Tigan, who came to the Rebellion after seeing the true evil and corruption at the heart of the Alliance, fall into this camp.

Of course, in the Mirror Universe "good guys" and "enlightened" carry slightly different meanings than they do in the Federation Universe. O'Brien is a relatively kind and understanding man, but he's still willing to kidnap people to force them (or their loved ones) to do something he needs done. Even an enlightened Mirror Universe government would involve a good deal of corruption; it just wouldn't include slavery and similar forms of degradation.

Restorationists

Terran Empire patriots comprise this faction. Though the Empire survives now only as a distant memory, the Restorationists work diligently to restore its lost glory. That means destroying the Alliance, rebuilding Earth and its power base, and reconquering the worlds of the former Empire (and perhaps more)—definitely not an easy task.

The Restorationists form the largest faction within the Rebellion. To them, the revolt against the Alliance centers on making Terrans a feared galactic power once more. They'd be more than happy to turn the tables and enslave every Klingon, Cardassian, and Bajoran they could, but they'd settle for reducing those three species to a point where they posed no threat to the Second Terran Empire.

REBELLION FRONT

The history related above mainly concerns the Terok Nor front of the fighting, where the Rebellion started and has enjoyed its greatest success to date. But rebels have opened up fronts in many other systems, and scored some important victories.

EARTH

To the Restorationists, certainly, Sol System—the location of Earth, the Terran Empire's homeworld and former seat of power—represents the most important front. As described earlier, an aging, yet spry, archaeologist named Jean-Luc Picard leads the Rebellion there. His rebel group, christened the Maquis, divides itself into four "battalions." Picard leads the 1st Battalion; his chief lieutenants Will Riker, Geordi La Forge, and Kathryn Janeway lead the other three. In most circumstances each unit works well with the others, though some tension does exist. The three lieutenants each think he (or she) should be the rightful leader of the Earth-based resistance, and each has plans in place to eliminate Picard when the time is right.

The Alliance has always maintained a significant presence on Earth because of its symbolic value and large slave population. As a result, the Maquis use terrorist tactics more often than their counterparts in Bajor Sector. The Maquis maintain relatively few ships (though their fleet was recently augmented by ships captured by the Terok Nor group), and no permanent bases like Terok Nor. Instead, they remain on-planet in small cells, hiding out in the countless ruined buildings that dot Earth's urban landscapes. They strike at the Alliance using a wide range of terrorist methods, including stealthy assassinations, infiltration of key installations, and bombings. What vessels they do have remain hidden in secret bases within the asteroid belt between Sol's fourth and fifth planets; Riker's group uses them in pirate-like raids on Alliance shipping.

So far, all of the Maquis' victories have remained small, but important—the destruction of key office buildings and factories, the freeing of groups of slaves (who almost always join them in the Rebellion), and the like. They have forged contacts with the Orion Cabal and other underworld groups on Earth, but treat them warily, knowing they'll sell the Rebellion out in a heartbeat if the rebels don't keep some sort of sword over their heads.

Betazed

On Betazed, a woman named Deanna Troi started and continues to lead the resistance. A second-class citizen on Betazed due to her half-Terran ancestry and consequently weaker psionic powers, Troi established a history of troublemaking and criminal activity from a very early age. Managing to escape severe punishment through a combination of bribery, blackmail, emotional manipulation, and seduction, she gradually became more and more entrenched in the Betazoid underworld. For reasons as yet unknown, her focus shifted from crime to rebellion in 2369 or 2370. Mobilizing her criminal contacts with promises that they would rule the planet after an Alliance defeat, her new "resistance" began attacking Alliance outposts and facilities whenever possible.

"Intendant" Troi, as she sometimes jokingly styles herself, concentrated her early efforts on stealing Alliance vessels and sabotaging enemy defensive capabilities. This strategy paid off handsomely in 2372, when her forces bribed and killed their way onto the Alliance's Betazed Orbital Construction Station and made off with several nearly complete Alliance warships. Viruses implanted in the BOCS computers allowed the group to repeat its attack six months later and steal even more ships.

Using these ships, Troi's group has managed to capture, and hold, several planets in a system near Betazed. They have teamed up with the Terok Nor forces several times to achieve military victories. Rumors persist that Troi wants to seduce, then kill, Miles O'Brien and take over leadership of the entire Rebellion. O'Brien scoffs at these tales.

Troi commands slavish devotion from most of her troops. Partly this has to do with her personal charisma, partly with the fact that she slits the throat of anyone whom she even suspects of plotting against her. Competition among her ranking underlings for her romantic affections has led to several deaths.

Trill

The Rebellion does not go well on Trill, and never has. Joined Trill remain the traditional leaders of the planet, and the Alliance bought most of them off long ago with promises not to harm them or their precious symbionts. Only a few nonjoined Trill fight to free their planet from the Alliance, and they have scored no significant victories. These rebels almost always target the Caves of Mak'ala, where the symbionts live, but the Alliance guards the caves so heavily that each assault has resulted only in scores of rebel dead.

Vulcan

On Vulcan, Rebellion forces contain a mixture of native Vulcans and prisoners sent to the planet as punishment. Selar, a former member of the Vulcan underworld who rebelled when the Alliance killed her lover, Saynok, serves as the de facto leader of the resistance. Appealing to the renowned logic of her people, Selar convinced many of them that they could not only free themselves from the rule of the Alliance, but thanks to their mental and physical superiority could triumph over the Terrans and establish their *own* empire. Thus, most Vulcan rebels are Restorationists—but with a definite twist.

Realizing that becoming trapped on Vulcan would spell the end of the Rebellion there, Selar managed to steal several ships. These vessels stay within or near the Vulcan system and make raids into the interior, sometimes even down to the surface of Vulcan itself to free more Vulcans and slaves. Over the past several years, Selar's forces have grown to the point where she had to form cells and establish sub-leaders, something she loathes but cannot prevent. She watches her subleaders cautiously, knowing each of them covets her job for himself.

XIII MIRRORING YOUR CHARACTER

Admit it. When you picked up this book, the first thought that came into your mind was "Hey, what's my character like in the Mirror Universe?" The concept of an entire universe filled with capricious, self-centered people all looking out for themselves does not, in itself, make the Mirror Universe so intriguing. Rather, the fact that the Mirror Universe, as its name indicates, mirrors the standard Star Trek settings—it contains an "evil twin" for each character you play, and every significant supporting cast member in your series—engages players and Narrators in a moral dance of give and take unlike anything else.

So, as a player, you want to discover the motivations and desires of your character's doppelganger—or, in a Mirror Universe series or story arc, perhaps even play him. As a Narrator, you need to figure out how to twist the NPCs to fit the new setting. This chapter provides guidelines for "mirroring" existing Federation Universe characters—altering them to create a Mirror Universe "twin" for each of them. You'll only find rules-oriented information in the sections that follow; for narrating guidelines and suggestions for how to mirror characters for maximum drama and fun, refer to Chapter Fifteen.

Two methods exist to mirror your Federation Universe character: the simple way and the complex way. The first method, useful for single Mirror Universe games where you don't want to spend too much time or effort on the task, simply translates an existing Federation Universe character and his abilities into Mirror Universe terms. Go over the character's sheet line by line, altering items based on suggestions in this chapter and the two that follow. For example, you'll replace your Courage points with Brutality Points, substitute a few skills, and perhaps change some Renown totals to better fit the Mirror Universe's views. In short, you'll "eyeball" the changes, making them quickly and cleanly, but possibly at the expense of some precision in terms of game balance. For a one-shot or short-term Mirror Universe game, character balance considerations become less important than just playing and having fun.

The complex method rebuilds your character step by step, as outlined below, but using the special Mirror Universe versions of species, professions, development packages, and traits. This takes time, and you'll have to do your best to remember what Development packages you chose (if any) if you didn't make note of them during character creation. But in the end you'll have a better developed, better balanced, and more thoroughly self-involved character for your sojourns through the Terran Empire and Klingon-Cardassian Alliance.

SPECIES

The first step in Mirror Universe character creation is, of course, to choose a species. For the most part, the species presented here do not differ significantly from those used in the Federation Universe. The following sections note major changes. If no difference is noted, use the standard Species.

BAJORANS

The primary difference for the Bajorans in the Mirror Universe lies in their cultural history; instead of being a weakened people formerly conquered by the Cardassians, they stand as a quadrant power that never suffered the horrors of the Cardassian occupation. In place of Cardassian oppression, they experienced a brutal occupation and forced colonization by the Terran Empire.

Mirror Bajorans do not have *pagh*; they possess the same Brutality Points as everyone else. After all, since they don't know about the wormhole and have neither Orbs nor Prophets to worship, what does it matter that they've sold their souls for power? Instead of the Faithful Species ability, Mirror Bajorans are masters of inserting themselves into bureaucratic systems and snapping up power vacuums. The new species ability Manipulative grants all Mirror Bajorans a +2 bonus to uses of the Knowledge: Politics skill.

Betazoids

The domineering telepaths of the Betazoids practice mental mastery, not pacifism. Instead of the Peaceful species advantage, Mirror Betazoids have the Dominant advantage. Since all Mirror Betazoids study psionic invasion techniques from childhood, they all gain a +1 bonus to Mind Shield and Mind Control skill tests.

Cardassians

Cardassians player characters in a Mirror Universe series should only appear if the Narrator runs an all-Cardassian or pro-Alliance series, or in the very rare case of a disenfranchised Cardassian forced to work in extreme circumstances (like Garak in the Federation Universe). Because the Cardassians never fought with or occupied Bajor in the Mirror Universe, as a people they bear no animosity toward the Bajorans (individuals may differ, of course; Garak clearly hates Intendant Kira, and perhaps all Bajorans).

Ferengi

Mirror Universe Ferengi have the same drive for profit and lobes for business as their greedy cousins in the Federation Universe. Of course, the Ferengi became enmeshed in the fall of the Terran Empire and subsequent birth of the Alliance, but they have weathered these events largely unchanged.

Humans

In the era of the Terran Empire, Humans stand at the pinnacle of the Alpha Quadrant. They retain the drive and advantages that gave them an edge over other species. Of course, the bonus Courage point from the Human Spirit Species advantage instead becomes a bonus Brutality point.

By the time of the Alliance, Humans are a crushed people. Still, Humans remain determined to claim their lost Imperial birthright, and must continue to be tough and adaptable as ever.

Klingons

Klingon player characters in a Mirror Universe series should only appear if the Narrator runs an all-Klingon or pro-Alliance series. If allowed as player characters, the Honor Species advantage changes. Instead of focusing on honor and the duties of a warrior, it promotes skill in battle and the vicious, brutal, ruthless destruction of one's enemies by any means possible (including assassination, poison, or treachery). A Klingon who does not act with dispatch to dispose of enemies or threats to his person violates the code. Klingons who have joined the rebellion against the Alliance usually try to control these tendencies and lead a slightly less violent and temperamental life, but not always.

Ocampa

While the Mirror Universe Ocampa didn't have a caring protector to defend them, they managed to eke out a living in the scientific labs of the Caretaker and survive its brutal experimentation on their species. Determined to break out, the Ocampa never had the opportunity to expand with the help of any Alpha Quadrant species, but intervention from altered histories could bring Mirror Ocampa into contact with the rest of the Alpha Quadrant.

The Ocampa Species advantages remain unchanged, although in the case of the Scholarly advantage, the bonus stems not from Ocampa love of research, but rather from constant exposure to the tests and trials imposed by the erratic Caretaker in his mazelike research facility.

Talaxians

Having survived the Metreon Cascade and turned a copy of it against the Haakonians, the Talaxians remain a broken species but one that emerged as the survivor in their brutal war. Their Species advantages are unchanged. As the foremost traders and slippery diplomats of the Delta Quadrant, the Talaxians are renowned for their ability to turn an adversary's ideas and words (and sometimes even weapons) against him.

Trill

The Mirror Universe Trill never had a strong chance of survival. Their own rigid caste society, with higher-ups gaining the benefits of joining while the unjoined remained as repressed proletariat, barely survived the stress of Imperial rule and finally crumbled under the pressures of the Alliance occupation.

Player character Trill from the Mirror Universe are not joined Trill. While the Mirror Trill are still Skilled as a species, simply due to the demands of survival, they are also Rugged: Mirror Trill gain a +2 bonus to all Survival tests, and a +1 bonus to any one reaction of the player's choice.

Vulcans

As with Mirror Klingons, Mirror Vulcans follow a slightly different Code of Honor than their Federation Universe brethren. The Vulcan code of behavior signifies a devotion to logic coupled with self-interest: to a Mirror Vulcan, it is logical to be selfish and attempt to acquire power and material possessions. Mirror

Vulcans do not match the Federation Vulcan asceticism and denial of personal desires; like so many other things, Mirror Vulcans pervert these disciplines. (Of course, during the era of rebellion against the Klingon-Cardassian Alliance, many rebel Vulcans may have rejected this philosophy in favor of the pure logic espoused by their Federation Universe counterparts.)

PROFESSIONS

Next, of course, you must choose a profession for your character. While professions remain *mostly* similar to their Federation Universe counterparts, a few changes are noteworthy. Most importantly, the rules remain the same—a character still has the same choices of favored abilities, spends picks on the same professional benefits, and so on—but the underlying "feel" of the profession is usually more selfish, violent, and cruel.

Imperial Starfleet Professions

During the era of the Terran Empire, Mirror Universe characters belonging to the Imperial Starfleet use standard Starfleet Officer elite professions with the changes noted in the following chapter, on pages XX. (If you don't see a given profession, assume that it's unchanged.)

Cardassian-Klingon Alliance Characters

If a Federation Universe character's counterpart serves the Cardassian-Klingon Alliance (like the Mirror versions of Kira, Worf, and Garak), you can create her using the appropriate Starship Officer profession with the necessary changes.

Rebels and Civilians

In the *Next Generation/Deep Space Nine* era, many mirrored characters will find themselves in civilian rather than military positions. Some may even have gotten involved in the rebellion to overthrow the Alliance.

Mirroring civilian characters—such as those normally found in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*—proves a relatively easy task. The Professions require few changes; abilities centered around virtue, contemplation and cooperation instead become focused upon intimidation, ruthlessness and depravity. The characters themselves become a lot more cutthroat—merchants willing to hire mercenaries to rough up the competition, diplomats who obtain needed concessions through a mixture of negotiation, terrorism, and assassination—but the basics of creating them remain mostly the same. Players may, with the Narrator's permission, substitute skills such as Ranged Weapon, an Armed Combat skill, or Indoctrinate (Brainwashing) for ones such as System Operations or Entertain (which often prove less useful in the Mirror Universe setting than a character's ability to defend himself from attackers or manipulate his enemies).

On the other hand, mirroring a Starfleet character who has joined the rebellion against the Alliance becomes one of the most difficult mirroring tasks. Since there's no Starfleet in the 24th century Mirror Universe, there's no way for them to obtain that type or level of training, and in fact their personal interests and career paths often differ significantly from those of their Federation Universe counterparts. The Mirror Bashir isn't a doctor, but an acerbic criminal; the Mirror Sisko is a pirate captain and sometime Alliance privateer/mercenary.

In most cases, to Mirror a Starfleet character, use one of the following civilian professions instead of their Starfleet profession: Soldier, Merchant or Rogue. At the Narrator's option, a skilled officer might have a different elite profession—the Mirror Sisko, for instance, probably has the Smuggler elite profession in contrast to the Federation Sisko's Starship Command Officer elite profession. If the player comes up with a background for his Mirror Universe counterpart that involves a different path into the rebellion—for example, a Terran character who starts out as an Alliance scientist or worker, but eventually defects to the rebels—he can build him using the rules in the next chapter, with appropriate adjustments.

BACKGROUND HISTORY

Mirroring a character's development requires a little creativity on the part of the player. Most Development packages do not change, or change only a little, in the Mirror Universe. Most changes relate to the story behind the package. In the Federation Universe, a character who's an Orphan probably lost his parents to an accident or epidemic. In the Mirror Universe, it's more likely that they were murdered, killed in a war, or worked to death by Alliance overseers.

Obviously, any package referring to Starfleet needs some alteration. During the era of the Terran Empire and Imperial Starfleet, most of these modifications remain cosmetic, such as changing the names of packages or specializations. For example, a character might take the Imperial Starfleet "Brat" Personal Development package instead of Starfleet "Brat," or Law (Imperial Starfleet Regulations) instead of Law (Starfleet Regulations).

Civilian characters may or may not have to make changes to their development packages. Many of them translate into the Mirror Universe with changes only to their personalities. For example, the Mirror Quark remains virtually identical to the Federation Universe Quark; he's just working in a more oppressive environment and acts, if anything, nicer than his Federation Universe counterpart. If players or Narrators find that

the appropriate civilian packages in the next chapter suit a character better than his Federation Universe packages, they may substitute them if desired. Similarly, minor changes to a character's Traits (substituting such Mirror Universe staples as Aggressive, Cruel, or Ruthless for less appropriate Federation Universe traits) may suit the Mirror Universe better.

TRAITS

For the most part, skills, edges, and flaws work the same in the Mirror Universe as they do in the Federation Universe. Of course, some traits are more common in the Mirror Universe, and vice-versa; Armed Combat provides a good example of a skill possessed more often by Mirror Universe characters. For notes on the application of skills, advantages, and disadvantages in the Mirror Universe, including some new Traits designed specifically for Mirror characters, please refer to the next two chapters.

Brutality Points (Courage Points)

Mirror Universe characters don't use Courage Points; they have *Brutality Points*. Generally, Brutality Points work just like Courage Points: all characters start out with 3 Brutality Points; advantages that provide extra Courage Points provide Brutality Points instead; characters can spend up to four Brutality Points per round to improve Tests, at the rate of +3 to the Test per point spent. However, there are a couple of important differences between the two.

First, Brutality Points represent just that: a character's ruthless nature and willingness to do anything to get ahead. If the character performs a selfless act—if he does anything to benefit someone else without even an indirect benefit for himself—he may not spend more than *one* Brutality Point to assist that action. A character may spend Brutality Points normally as long as an action ultimately serves to benefit the character, even if it doesn't initially appear that way. For example, assassinating a superior officer, currying favor, seducing innocents, committing crimes, cheating, or lying all represent actions on which up to four Brutality Points may be spent.

Second, Brutality Points cannot compare to the strength of the Human spirit in the Federation Universe; this is simply an axiom of the *Star Trek* cosmology. Whenever a Mirror Universe character spends Brutality Points in an Opposed Test against a Federation Universe character or group, the Federation Universe characters can spend *one* Courage Point to negate the effect of *all* of the Brutality Points spent. The characters cannot spend any additional Courage Points to further influence the test, though.

Renown

Renown works identically for Mirror Universe characters. The Terran Empire, however, places different values on reputation than does Starfleet. A character with a reputation for innovation, for instance, may suffer penalties in reactions because his superiors see him as a threat, while a character with a reputation for incompetence is likely to be enslaved or killed instead of just mustered out of the service.

Rank

Mirror Universe versions of Federation Universe characters will usually possess the same rank as their Starfleet counterparts, reached through very different means (assassination, treachery, etc.). Characters created specifically for Mirror Universe series set during the Terran Empire era start with the rank of Ensign unless they choose the Promotion edge during character creation. Alliance-era Mirror Universe characters also begin play with the rank of Ensign unless they choose the *Promotion* advantage during character creation.

Wound Levels

Mirror Universe characters calculate their Wound Levels in the standard manner.

MIRROR UNIVERSE CHARACTER CREATION

In the Terran Empire era of the Mirror Universe, characters take on roles substantially different from those of their Federation Universe counterparts. In game terms, this requires slightly different Professions, Development packages, and Traits. In many cases the changes, if any, are relatively minor; they help to emphasize the differences between the two universes and to create the "feel" appropriate for the episode or series.

Players can select from a somewhat broader range of character possibilities during the Alliance era. In addition to playing Klingon, Cardassian, or Bajoran members of the Alliance Forces (which aren't too different from Imperial Starfleet characters in most ways), they can play members of the Terran Rebellion. Rebels typically follow civilian professions, in that they're not military personnel with high levels of training (and, thus, they are more like characters built for a *Deep Space Nine*-style series than a regular *Star Trek* or *Star Trek: The Next Generation* series). Many of them also come from disreputable backgrounds, such as petty crime or piracy.

To create an Alliance-era character, first find out from your Narrator what types of characters he envisions for his series. If the episode or series focuses on the efforts of the Rebellion to win a major victory in the Epsilon Eridani System, playing Alliance officers or Obsidian Order spies probably isn't a good idea. After you've arrived at an acceptable concept, choose a Species and Profession appropriate to your character, and take him through the Development stages described below.

Mirror Universe character creation follows the same steps as Federation Universe character creation. Players choose a Species and Profession to represent the basic character they have in mind, then create that character's past with the Development stages. However, their choices for careers and Development packages often differ significantly from their Federation Universe counterparts.

PROFESSIONS

Players can use the various changes to Professions here as guidelines in how to modify Mirror Professions. Additionally, Terran Empire characters, unlike their Federation counterparts, have no restrictions on their Elite Professions—a Terran Empire Starship Medical Officer could conceivably enter the Assassin Elite Profession, if desired. As always, if a profession isn't listed here, assume that it's unchanged in rules, if not in spirit. A scientist, for instance, may have the same skills as her Federation Universe counterpart, but would hardly be in the business out of a desire for knowledge or altruism.

Mystic

A mystic relies on the fear and guilt inspired by her religion, and upon the sense of spiritual superiority imparted. Therefore, an Orion mystic doesn't use

proverbs to comfort, but to cow; a Vulcan *kolinahru* shows the inferiority and flaws of his pupils in order to emphasize the strength of *kolinahr* instead of pointing out ways to improve.

The Tier 2 ability of Inspiration allows the mystic to refresh Brutality Points instead of Courage points, but otherwise functions identically.

Starship Command

To obtain (and retain) a command position in the Imperial Starfleet often requires more than just sufficient rank and ability—the character must routinely kill anyone who stands in his way. Accordingly, Command officers are usually skilled fighters as well as administrators. The requirement of Administration (parent organization) 4+ is reduced to 2+, but the Command officer must also have a 2+ in any weapon skill.

A Mirror Universe Command officer learns to motivate troops through fear, not through loyalty or "team spirit." The Tier 3 Command ability functions based upon the character's Intimidate skill for Mirror Universe characters, not based upon Persuade.

Starship Engineer

Players of Engineer characters may, if they wish, replace the Physical Sciences professional skill with Demolitions.

Starship Security Officer

Security Officers must be on the forefront of battle in the Mirror Universe. For some it's by inclination; for others, it's a way to gain fame and recognition. The Tier 2 Tactical Officer ability functions for Mirror Universe Security Officers who lead from the front—that is, those who inspire their crew by charging into battle. It may not be smart, but it encourages the morale of the troops, and it also fulfills the Mirror Universe's axiom of dramatic action.

Starship Counselor

Although the Terran Empire technically falls before it would ever introduce "counselors," some ships of the line might have "morale officers" who perform a similar function. By the same token, both Terran and Alliance ships routinely had political officers, whose job was to insure that the crew kept the best loyal interests of the government in mind. Crossing a political or morale officer is a dangerous move—often, the crew despises these officers, but they have powerful friends in government positions. Any attempt at a mutiny must first deal with the political officer. For obvious reasons, the majority of political officers have some terrible threat or blackmail hanging over them, to guarantee loyalty to the government. In return, these officers mete out unprejudiced malice to all other crew, subjecting them to endless "loyalty tests," "indoctrination sessions," and "character-building."

A Counselor of this type requires Inquire (Interrogation) 2+ instead of Inquire (Interview).

Mirror Counselors substitute Indoctrinate for the First Aid skill, and replace Inquire (Interview) with Inquire (Interrogation) as a professional skill.

The Counselor's Tier 1 ability of Pathos is replaced with Coercion: The ship's counselor is an expert in weeding out the fears of subjects and playing upon them. When making an Inquire (Interrogation) skill test, ignore all social penalties.

The Tier 2 ability of Therapy is replaced with Terrorization: Counselors deliberately use crew members' problems, anxieties and phobias to turn the crew into balls of seething hate directed at the Empire's (and the counselor's) enemies. The Counselor can make an Indoctrinate skill test (TN 15) to enrage the subject and turn the subject's anger and bitterness into active spite. This refreshes one Brutality point for the subject. Such a session takes about a half hour, often involving an agonizer booth or psionic manipulation. The Counselor can work on as many patients as desired in a session, but each individual can only be worked over once per session.

Starship Medical Officer

In addition to being skilled surgeons, Imperial Starfleet doctors act as adept interrogators as well. Their study of anatomy lends itself to an expertise in torture. Furthermore, they have access to—and a ready willingness to use—a wide panoply of terrifying drugs and implants.

The Tier 2 ability Diagnosis applies as a bonus not only on Medicine tests to treat a subject, but also to understand what's happened and how to replicate it—useful in learning to control a potentially useful alien drug or parasite.

The Tier 2 ability Rehabilitation is replaced with Entrenchment: Once a medical officer has his hooks in a patient, he rarely lets go. A successful additional Medicine roll allows the officer to surreptitiously slip a narcotic, implant or other substitute into the subject, thereby forcibly rendering the subject under his control—whether by threat of addiction or just the terror of some unknown substance that only the medical officer understands. If successful, the officer can add half of his Medicine skill as a bonus to all of his social tests against that subject.

The Tier 3 ability Immunization is replaced with Test Subjects: The medical officer can prescribe a "routine treatment" that actually includes experimental drugs and supplements. With a Medicine test (TN 15), the officer can create a compound that grants a +2 to one ability for 1d6 hours. Unfortunately, these experimental treatments also have negative side-effects, and the Narrator should assign either a –4 to the same attribute for twice as long once the initial duration runs out, or else give the character a temporary flaw

to represent the problems of the drug or implant. The officer can make a batch of experimental material in a half-hour with the use of a fully-equipped medical lab or sickbay.

Elite Professions

Most elite professions remain largely the same in the Mirror Universe. People who are good at killing and blowing things up are, by and large, even better at this in the dark reflection; people who understand motives and how to twist words are even more terrifying in their scheming.

The elite professions in the *Star Trek RPG Player's Guide* remain unchanged, with the exception of the ambassador. Ambassadors in the Mirror Universe rely more on intimidation and propaganda than upon goodwill and honest negotiations, as explained here.

Ambassador

While diplomats handle delicate negotiations and treaty violations, the ambassadors decide the fate of political boundaries and blocs of power. It's through the large-scale manipulation of voters, popular sentiment, government officials and even market forces that ambassadors ply their trade. Able to affect the course of galactic events just based on their *reputation* for cruelty, ambassadors may not live by the sword, but they make sure that plenty of other people die by the sword.

Mirror Universe ambassadors replace the requirements of Negotiate (Mediate) 4+ with Influence (Intimidate) 4+. Most ambassadors have the Persuade specialty of Propaganda.

While ambassadors may not have full "diplomatic immunity"—nobody would willingly allow an agent of a hostile power to wander free—they do have a remarkable ability to lay down such incredible cover stories that their enemies hesitate to move against them, fearing some larger scale plot in motion. The ambassador in the Mirror Universe uses his Influence skill test to gain Diplomatic Immunity, instead of Law. Since all ambassadors will have Influence (Intimidate) of 4+, this ability's prerequisite is moot, unless some character uses a special edge to gain this ability.

The Master Negotiator ability of an ambassador is replaced instead with Master Manipulator. The ability applies to Persuade instead of Negotiate.

Development Packages

Instead of a blow-by-blow account of every package, apply the following modifications to all of the development packages, both professional and personal:

Replace all instances of Federation with Empire, and Starfleet with Imperial Starfleet. The same applies to references to other species-specific groups—a Bajoran character would be unlikely to have a resistance background fighting the Cardassians, but might have Tactics (Terran) in order to better fight the Empire.

Skill Substitutions

Mirror Universe characters rarely practice Entertain or Sport. Entertain skills like dancing and playing music are left to aesthetic slaves. Sports are more often lethal matches of combat as opposed to games. For this reason, any package that includes Entertain or Sport can choose to take those bonuses in Armed Combat or Unarmed Combat instead. If the package already grants a bonus to a chosen skill, the bonuses stack. For instance, if a package normally grants Sport +1 and Unarmed Combat +1, a Mirror Universe character could take Unarmed Combat +2 instead.

Because Mirror Universe characters have little love or use for negotiation, they're better at strong-arm tactics, intimidation and torture. For this reason, any package that grants a bonus to Persuade may instead grant a bonus to Inquire. Any bonus to Negotiate may instead grant a bonus to Indoctrinate.

A Mirror Universe character doesn't *have* to take the substitutions—a character could still have Entertain if desired—but would certainly be unusual (and probably thought weak) by Mirror Universe standards.

Because of the changes in packages, some Mirror Universe combinations might have more than 6 points of skills in certain combat skills, like Unarmed Combat. The usual limit of 6 levels of skill still applies to a starting character. Excess points are lost—this is the price of ruthlessness compared to a philosophy of enlightened personal development.

Personal Development

Mirror Universe characters have the usual run of personal development packages. The packages below represent some additional opportunities that are rather more common in the Mirror Universe than in the Federation Universe.

Falsified Credentials

You managed to sneak into an organization such as the Imperial Starfleet through a combination of cunning, ruthlessness, bribery, and forged papers—just hope that someone in a position of *real* authority never finds out.

Pick 1 Skill: Forgery +2, Impersonate +2, Influence +2

Pick 3 Skills: Armed Combat (pick one) +1, Computer Use +1, Conceal +1, Enterprise: Streetwise +1, Persuade +1, Stealth +1, System Operation +1, Unarmed Combat (pick one) +1

Pick 2 Edges: Ally, Contacts, Shrewd, Skill Focus (Furtive), Skill Focus (Persuasive)

Flaw (Mandatory): Dark Secret

Former Slave

You were a slave for a long time, whether as a prisoner of the Terran Empire or a bondsman to the Alliance.

Pick 1 Skill: Craft (pick one) +2, Entertain +2, Persuade +2

Pick 3 Skills: Appraise +1, Armed Combat (pick one) +1, Athletics +1, Construct +1, Influence +1, Observe +1, Sleight of Hand +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Unarmed Combat (pick one) +1

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Contacts, Everyman, Fit, Great Vitality, Sherpa

Professional Development

To aid in their career development, counselors can use the professional development packages included below.

Interrogation Officer (Counselor)

You learned the techniques to wheedle, cajole, extort, and blackmail secrets out of just about anyone, and you use those talents to ensure the loyalty of your fellow crew members.

Skills: Armed Combat (pick one skill) +1, Computer Use (Retrieve) +2, Conceal +2, Indoctrinate +3, Influence +2, Inquire (Interrogation) +4, Observe +3, Ranged Combat: Energy Weapons +1

Pick 5 Skills: +1 to any professional skill

Pick 1 Edge: Competitive, Confident, Deliberate Attack, Exceptional Concentration, Promotion, Resolute, Shrewd

Political Officer (Counselor)

You are essentially a spy aboard a vessel, station, or outpost, there to guarantee the orthodoxy of the Crew and to report back any errors in judgment—which also gives you significant blackmail power.

Skills: Computer Use (Retrieve) +1, Forgery (Detecting) +1, Indoctrinate +3, Influence +2, Knowledge: Law +3, Knowledge: Politics +4, Negotiate +2, Persuade +2

Pick 5 Skills: +1 to any professional skill

Pick 1 Edge: Commendation, Command, Friendly, Iron Willed, Likeable, Promotion, Resolute, Unyielding

MIRROR SKILLS

Generally, skills function identically in both the Mirror and Federation Universes. Unless noted otherwise, the following information applies to Alliance characters as well. Terran, Klingon, or Cardassian, they can all be equally cruel.

Existing Skills

The following material presents not only ways to implement different skills, but ways to showcase existing skills in a Mirror Universe fashion. Just because two characters both have the Inquire skill doesn't mean that they go about it the same way. Consider the difference in tactics between the Cardassians who Inquired into Jean-Luc Picard's background during his capture, versus Counselor Troi's ability to Inquire into what motivates the crew.

Enterprise: Administration

A lot of planetary administration in the Mirror Universe boils down to riot suppression and labor oversight. Coordinating suppression of a minor labor dispute (one factory) or riot (a couple of city blocks) would be TN 10. Working up a cogent plan to disperse a revolutionary faction (an enemy factor in the government) or to suppress a planetary revolt would be TN 25. Successful use of the Administration skill allows the character to work up a plan and connect with subordinates and superiors effectively. The coordinator's final roll adds to the effort: Each point by which the Administration roll beats the difficulty counts as a point that the administrator can choose to add to someone else's roll while executing the plan. So, if an administrator scored a 17 while trying to suppress a small uprising (TN 10), he would be able to split up 7 points of bonuses among the squad of crack security troops sent in to bust some skulls—allowing them to smack around several protesters, or make one big push for the ringleader.

Enterprise: Streetwise

The oppressed peoples of the Mirror Universe use this skill to maintain a black market and conduct activities away from the sight of prying government eyes. Black Market and Rebellion Underground represent two of the most popular specializations (though the rebellion naturally tries to control access to the latter).

Indoctrinate

A common skill among commanders, the Imperial Starfleet version of this skill concentrates on keeping subordinates in line. Most adept commanders use this skill regularly, if subtly, on their senior officers and crew. A subordinate whose will bends favorably toward his commander is less likely to challenge his superior. Careful commanders often plant seeds of dissent among their senior staff early during a long mission; if trouble begins, the commander can activate his "plants" when necessary, possibly diverting unwanted attention or aggression away from himself and dispersing it among his crew.

Influence (Intimidation)

Like Indoctrinate, Intimidation often appears in the repertoire of many Imperial Starfleet officers. Many combine it with the Inquire (Interrogation) specialization, finding it useful when dealing with newly conquered clients or subject species.

Inquire

Obviously, in the Mirror Universe the favored specialty for Inquire is Interrogation. Interrogation works best when the subject is plied with painful motivation and drugs, but a skillful interrogator can work with just a pair of handcuffs, a dirty chair under a lamp, and a leering grin.

Working over a subject with Interrogation usually requires an opposed test, unlike normal uses of the Inquire skill. The victim uses Willpower to resist. With a successful Interrogation roll, the questioner can garner a piece of useful information; on an extraordinary success, the subject "breaks" and spills 1D6+1 pieces of useful information. Each session of interrogation requires 1D6x10 minutes to complete, and inflicts 2D6 damage on the victim. On a complete failure, the interrogator either accidentally harms the victim too much (causing double damage), or loses his own composure (and thus cannot gain any further information from that subject in that day). Use of appropriate drugs and devices can add +2 to +5 on uses of the Inquire (Interrogation) skill.

Negotiate

Relatively few Imperial Starfleet characters possess this skill. After all, Imperial Starfleet officers don't negotiate; they conquer and take. When such negotiations do occur, they normally constitute stall tactics or forms of treachery, and as such involve Influence (Fast Talk) more often than not.

Tactics

An important Tactics specialization for Imperial characters is *Planetary Suppression,* the skill of defeating a world's ground forces and retaining the territory taken from them. The Narrator can call for a Tactics (Planetary Suppression) Test as a way of quickly resolving a large ground battle.

When approaching the same problem from space, Mirror characters often use the Planetary Invasion & Bombardment specialization of the Tactics skill. This teaches them the best way to approach a planet with starships when you intend to conquer it, how to discern the weaknesses in planetary defense grids, and how to use phasers, photon torpedoes, and other starship weapons to attack a planet's surface to greatest effect. (Difficulty varies from TN 5, to coordinate the invasion of a defenseless colony, to TN 25, in order to find a blind spot in a homeworld defense grid and slip a ship through to a vantage point where it can bomb a central command site.)

MIRROR TRAITS

As with skills, most edges and flaws apply to Mirror Universe characters in the same way they apply to Federation Universe characters. Of course, certain edges and flaws reflect differently in the Mirror Universe. In the Mirror Universe, ruthlessness and cruelty typically become *desirable* qualities—thus, edges represent these traits. Conversely, some aspects of a character's personality, such as kindness or mercy, are poorly regarded or disadvantageous in the Mirror Universe. The notes below detail some of the changes to existing Traits, and provide some new ones just for Mirror Universe characters.

Existing Edges

Many edges behave differently in the Mirror Universe. The following rules demonstrate how these differences manifest during play.

Ally and Contact

These advantages are not as common in the Mirror Universe as in the Federation Universe because allies, contacts, and the like are not to be trusted. Just because someone owes you a favor doesn't mean he'll actually come through, or won't try to stab you in the back while he's helping you. Some exceptions exist—during the Alliance era, Cardassian influences throughout the Alpha Quadrant have caused their *vesala* "web of influence" system to spread into other cultures to some extent—but many characters prefer to rely on themselves alone. This isn't to say that there are no allegiances; it's easy to round up a gang of roughnecks with promises of glory and wealth. It's just not wise to leave them to their own devices and trust them not to betray you.

Political Rank

Individuals with important positions in the Terran or Alliance government may have Political Rank, which works similar to the Promotion edge. This edge represents the character's standing and office, but also indicates that the character likely has some enemies from along the way!

Promotion

Ranks in the Imperial Starfleet are the same as those in the Federation Universe's Starfleet of the same period (see page 136 of the *Star Trek Player's Guide*).

New Edges

The following edges are new for Mirror Universe characters.

Aggressive

The character takes a forceful, even violent, approach to solving most problems. Rather than seeking a subtle solution or backing down in the face of opposition, he charges ahead like a bull in a china shop—or like a man on his way to the captain's chair.

Effect: The character receives a +5 bonus instead of a +3 bonus whenever he spends a Brutality Point to force others to do what he says or accept his commands, when he responds to an argument or dispute with violence, or the like.

Cruel

The character enjoys making others suffer, and in fact is quite good at it. From torture to emotional manipulation to inflicting psychological pain, he can do it all with skill, aplomb, and zeal.

Effect: Whenever he tries to make others suffer (including most Intimidation Tests and similar circumstances), the character receives +5 per Brutality Point spent instead of +3. (This bonus does not apply to ordinary combat, but might if the character, for example, used his forces to play cat-and-mouse with an inferior foe, or if he deliberately tries to shoot someone not to kill, but to cause pain.)

Minions

The character maintains a corps of loyal flunkies who take orders from him and assist him with his schemes (typically in the hopes of "riding his coattails" as he climbs the ladder of command). The number of minions, and their loyalty, vary with treatment and their appraisal of the character's chances. Most minions should represent junior members of a ship's crew (typically ensigns); no minion can ever have a rank equal to or exceeding that of the character.

Effect: With an appropriate social roll—often Influence (10)—the character can parley his minions into backing him up. Unlike Allies, Minions don't go off to do things for the character elsewhere, nor do they have useful information like Contacts. Instead, the Minions basically act as muscle, ready to follow the character if they think the spoils are ripe. A character typically has two Minions with the basic pick of this edge.

See also the supporting cast notes in the *Star Trek RPG Narrator's Guide*, page 234, as a guideline to the skills that minions will tend to have. As a guide, minions aren't super-competent; otherwise they'd be leaders, doing things for themselves.

Upgrade: Each upgrade taken represents another order of magnitude of Minions. Double the number of Minions with each upgrade. A character with enough Minions has a personal army!

Miraculous Survival

For some reason, the character is damnably hard to kill off. Regardless of the death traps, backup plans and disintegrations involved, the character always seems to crop up again at the worst possible moment.

Effect: When the character is killed in the course of play, the player goes off to dream up a story development to account for his miraculous survival. The dead body might belong to a clone, an alternate universe counterpart, or lifelike robot. It might be a disguised alien, surgically-altered impostor, or energy being in mortal form. The entire death scene might have been an illusion or hallucination. The Narrator vets the player's explanation to preserve at least a veneer of plausibility, and to make sure it doesn't contradict any important established plot elements in his series. The only explanation he should flat-out reject is "it was only a dream."

The player conceals his character's survival from the rest of the group. He either creates a new, temporary character to play for a while, or pretends to create a new character who is in fact the old one in disguise. Player and Narrator confer to choose the most entertaining moment to reveal that the character still lives. The character delivers a monologue explaining, in flashback, the details of his miraculous survival.

Miraculous Survival is not a sure thing. The player must expend all of his Brutality Points for the session in order to survive by the skin of his teeth. If the character is caught and killed while out of Brutality Points, then this edge cannot save him.

Once he uses this edge, the player must remove it from his character sheet.

Upgrade: You may purchase multiples of this edge; each one protects your character from a single death.

Ruthless

A character with this advantage has even fewer scruples than the average Mirror Universe character when it comes to doing whatever it takes to advance or obtain something he desires. Without hesitation or remorse he will kill, betray, or steal to improve his position. Fear of potential consequences represents the only limitation on his actions.

Effect: The character receives a +5 bonus instead of +3 whenever he spends a Brutality Point as he engages in treacherous or deceitful actions designed to benefit himself, such as the assassination of a superior (this bonus does not apply if he's being cruel to help someone else, or simply for the fun of it).

Existing Flaws

Many flaws behave differently in the Mirror Universe. The following rules demonstrate how these differences manifest during play.

Addiction

Addictive drugs and similar substances are quite common in both the Empire and the Alliance, making this disadvantage similarly common. Plenty of Imperial officers enjoy Saurian brandy and other fine drinks, and more than a few indulge in even stronger substances.

Arrogant, Intolerant, Proud

Almost everyone in the Mirror Universe has one these flaws. Any character can legitimately choose either of these flaws. Note that in many times and places, these "flaws" are not regarded as character defects by the general populace. Indeed, a character who makes a great deal of his one-sided views and lives up to them—boasting of his amazing abilities and then pulling off an incredible stunt, for instance—may even gain Renown.

Dark Secret

Dark Secrets (revealed or not) are very common in the Mirror Universe. Most Imperial Starfleet and Alliance personnel have a few skeletons in their closets—secret betrayals, illicit affairs, forbidden technology, severe breaches of regulations, and similar occurrences. It's all part and parcel of life in the Mirror Universe, and sometimes gives rise to blackmail. Similarly, secret members of the rebellion may take this to represent the fact that their involvement in the revolt remains unknown to the authorities.

Enemy, Rival

In a society with so many power-hungry, highly-skilled individuals, it's no surprise that they often end up butting heads as they seek the same position, job, or advantage. As a result, Rivals and Enemies abound. Mirror Universe Rivals try to kill their rivals, similar to Enemies—they're just not as unrelenting or as serious about it. A Mirror Rival will settle for humiliating or defeating a character; a Mirror Enemy *must* kill him, preferably in some extremely painful or embarrassing way.

New Flaws

The following flaws are new for Mirror Universe characters.

Hunted

Similar to Rival and Enemy, this flaw means that the character has an adversary who actively pursues him with the intent of killing or capturing him. A hunter is more "proactive" than an Enemy; he devotes virtually his entire life to tracking down and harming the char-

acter (either by himself, or through hired proxies such as professional assassins).

Effect: Unlike an Enemy, a Hunted flaw indicates an individual with a grudge and some personal skill but not necessarily a whole group behind him. Your character's Hunted flaw means that an adversary roughly equal in power to the character shows up about one session in six—the Narrator rolls 1d6 before each game session; on a 1, the hunter shows up to aid the foes or thwart the character.

A hunter has personal resources and a great thirst for vengeance. While the hunter does not have the equivalent of Promotion like an Enemy, the hunter typically has personal access to weapons and ships that can at least match the character's own. Savvy hunters may even bribe or coerce the character's allies into turning against him.

Killing the hunter doesn't necessarily stop the violence. Friends, brothers, supporters and admirers will flock to take the hunter's place unless you buy off this flaw with advancements.

Upgrade: For one upgrade, your hunter shows up more often—on a 1 or 2 on a 1d6. Also for one upgrade, your hunter is not just an individual, but a group of people with a grudge. Typically this indicates three people, but it could be as many as a full bridge crew for a small ship that can give you a run for your crew's money.

Merciful

The character suffers from that greatest of Mirror Universe weaknesses—kindness. He prefers to grant mercy rather than ruthlessly exterminate his enemies. Perhaps he's squeamish, or maybe he honestly feels some sense of kindness or remorse.

Effect: When in a situation where the character can either grant mercy (without causing significant direct harm to himself) or take punitive action, he must spend a Brutality Point to resist granting mercy. Characters who grant mercy regularly will almost certainly suffer a hit to their Renown, and will certainly leave an enemy alive at some unfortunate point.

Watched

The character is being watched or surveilled by someone who is suspicious of, or hostile toward, him. In the Mirror Universe, this typically means Empire or Alliance Security forces, but it could also represent a rival, an enemy political faction, or someone similar. The Watcher will use any means at his disposal, from physical surveillance to electronic "bugging" to tracking the character's use of computer systems, to watch the character.

A Watcher's purpose is mainly to keep tabs on the character and compile a dossier of information on him. There may be a sinister purpose behind this activity—collecting blackmail information about the character, for example—or it may be that the Watcher wants to maintain a complete file on the character "just in case." In any event, it's bad news for the character, who will have difficulty conducting private meetings and keeping things to himself.

Effect: The character has a dossier on file with "the authorities" (be they legitimate or otherwise), which can come back to haunt him in his dealings. Any time the character hatches a plot, tries to bury a secret or otherwise conspires to cover something up, any enemy investigating the event gains the character's Renown modifier as a bonus to the die roll on attempts to uncover the dirt. The more infamous and notorious the character, the more widespread the knowledge of his dirty deeds becomes.

MIRROR UNIVERSE POLITICAL RANKS

Political Rank	Terran Empire	Alliance
1	Overseer	Overseer
2	Prefect	Commander
3	Attaché	Governor
4	Governor	Intendant
5	Senator	Sector Commandant

THE MIRROR TOOLKIT

Whether as an element in their regular Star Trek games, or as the setting of for an entire series, this chapter goes behind the glass and shows you, the Narrator, how to use the Mirror Universe.

THE MIRROR UNIVERSE IN YOUR SERIES

The Mirror Universe offers plenty of opportunities for fun gaming even if you intend to dip your toes only infrequently into its cold and acidic waters. You may not want to interrupt your current *Star Trek Roleplaying Game* series to start anew in the Mirror Universe. Your players may like playing the good guys.

If so, use the setting as it was employed in "Mirror, Mirror" and the various episodes that took the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* characters to the dimension where shadows reign. Like the Romulan Star Empire or Cardassian Union, it serves as a wellspring of antagonists with which to vex your Crew.

Depending on your players' reaction to your first Mirror Universe episode, you can either leave it as a one-shot, as per the original series, or use the Mirror Universe as a recurring element, as *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* did.

Through the Looking Glass

The last thing you want is for your players, upon discovering that you're introducing the Mirror Universe, to nod knowingly and say, "Ho-hum, this week we're remaking 'Mirror Mirror'. How did Kirk get out of that one, does anybody remember?" Your challenge is to introduce them to the Mirror Universe in a new and surprising way.

One way to do this is to trick them by making them think they're remaking a different episode. Start with one of the other classic *Star Trek* story types, and then add a Mirror Universe twist.

The Trial

Starfleet security officers arrest a Crew member for committing mass murder during his shore leave. The crime was committed on a planet far distant from the world where he was supposed to be enjoying his time off. The Crew member awakens with a fearsome headache and no memory of his activities over the past few days. Even he might think he might have done the things he's accused of. The other Crew members must investigate to clear their friend's name. Throw them red herring clues that lead them to suspect possession by an alien entity. In fact, the crime was committed by the mirror version of the arrested Crew member. Among the victims were escapees from the Empire (or, in a 24th century game, the Alliance). They built a device to travel to the Federation Universe, where they planned to seize a technology or person who could help them in their bid for power back home. The mirror Crew member works for Imperial Security or some other opponent of his victims' organization. He framed his Federation

universe counterpart for the crime, to throw off Starfleet security as he tracks down the item or person his victims sought.

Gladiators

Highly advanced yet amoral aliens kidnap the Crew to subject them to an experiment. They're forced to fight as gladiators in an arena. They fight several waves of opponents, each tougher than the last, while fruitlessly struggling to find a means of escape. Finally they confront the foes their disembodied captors expect to defeat them: their Mirror Universe counterparts. The Mirror versions possess something—information, an item of technology—which, together with the work done by the Crew, would give both sides a way to defeat the god-like aliens and get out of the arena. The Crew must convince their counterparts to cooperate instead of killing them.

Interdimensional Imperialism

Crew members crash-land on a primitive planet. Contact with its people would normally be off-limits, due to the Prime Directive. They find that another advanced society is interfering with the locals' normal development, pitting the tribesmen against one another in a war over valuable mineral deposits. At first they find evidence pointing to their usual adversaries, like Klingons, Romulans, or Ferengi. Ultimately they discover that the mirror counterparts of the two closest friends among the Crew run the rival factions. Their Mirror versions are sworn enemies who hate one another with a passion. The Crew must defeat both and do their best to restore the tribal society to an undisturbed path.

Endangered V.I.P.

The Crew performs security duty at a Federation symposium. An ambassador or other dignitary vanishes. Worse, surveillance data shows a Crew member holding him at phaser-point and escorting him into a shuttle bay. The character's mirror counterpart was assigned by his superiors (or hired, or forced) to capture the mirror V.I.P. alive. Unfortunately, the first kidnap attempt went awry, and the Mirror dignitary bit the dust. So the mirror Crew member took the Federation equivalent of his quarry. He intends to brainwash his victim in order to pass him off as the dead counterpart. The Crew must rescue the dignitary and clear their member of the crime.

Your Own "Mirror Mirror"

Some groups love to revisit classic *Star Trek* episodes, and would never dream of spoiling the fun by making yawning noises when they realize which one they're now doing. If your group fits this profile, they might be disappointed by the subterfuges listed above. Instead, you'll want to hit them with as close a version of the original as you can.

Here's a recap of "Mirror Mirror": an ion storm in the Halkan system causes a transporter malfunction that sends our Kirk, McCoy, Scotty and Uhura to the *I.S.S. Enterprise*, while Spock and the other regulars deal with their mirror counterparts on the *U.S.S. Enterprise*. Our Spock has little trouble identifying the mirror Kirk and company as doppelgangers, and orders them immediately confined to the brig. Kirk realizes that he's in a twisted alternate universe. He escapes assassination by mirror Chekov, and makes mirror Spock suspicious when he hesitates before exterminating recalcitrant aliens (the Halkans, who refuse to turn over to the Empire their supply of dilithium crystals). Mirror Spock receives orders from Earth to kill Kirk and take over as captain. Kirk convinces him, and the ambitious Captain's Woman Marlena Moreau, to assist his crew members in altering the transporter to allow them back to their own dimension. Before the Federation characters depart, Kirk plants in mirror Spock's mind the idea of replacing mirror Kirk and using his position as *Enterprise* captain to nudge the Empire toward a more enlightened state.

Your version of the episode should contain the following core elements:

- A plot device to switch half the Crew with Mirror Universe counterparts.
- A confrontation between Federation and Mirror characters.
- A means for the Federation characters to return to their own universe.

For the confrontation, you can stick with the current structure, setting the confrontation on the mirror version of the Crew's vessel. Or try this: each set of interlopers takes over a ship. Federation types aboard the *I.S.S. Your-Ship-Name-Here* quickly stage a coup that wins them command of the vessel; their counterparts do the same on the *U.S.S. Your-Ship-Name-Here*. The conflict resolves in the Federation universe, as the captured officers try to wrest control from the Mirror Crew members before they use the ship to do something awful. They might plan to attack and loot a passenger cruiser, start a war with the Tholians, or destroy Starfleet headquarters. Or perhaps your dimension-crossing device allows the entire *I.S.S. Your-Ship-Name-Here* to cross over to the Federation universe, setting the stage for hot pursuit and a culminating battle between the two equally-matched vessels.

Conversely, player characters in command of the Imperial ship could stay in its universe, while mirror

CONSPIRATORS VS. CREW

The term "Crew" doesn't always fit a Mirror Universe series. Your characters may not belong to Starfleet or a similar organization. They may not belong to one organization at all. They might not even be working together. So in the Mirror Universe, we use the term "Conspirator" as a synonym for "Player Character." "Conspirators" is, naturally, the term for all of the player characters, whether they're allies or sworn enemies.

characters in control of the Federation vessel could cross back over and try to capture them. The Empire could certainly make use of a new *Inquisition*-class ship, after all.

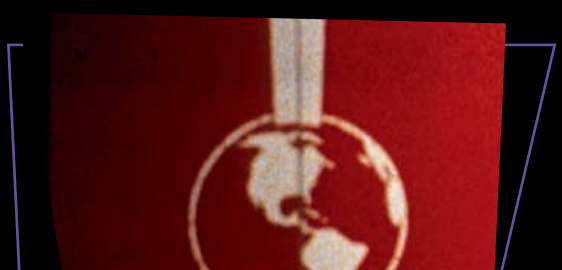
The basic setup of meeting one's mirror counterparts so clearly leads to conflict that you'll find this an easy adventure to improvise. Just keep the above possibilities in mind. Decide what suitably sinister mission the doppelgangers would be pursuing in their universe if not for the sudden appearance of their Federation counterparts. If all else fails, they can keep trying to fulfill that mission (in "Mirror Mirror," they want to kill the Halkans and take their crystals), so that the Crew's goal is to stop them. Of course, if the actions of the Crew give them an opening to do something even more profitable, they'll seize it.

Further Mirror Episodes

However you introduce the Mirror Universe, you can afterwards stage periodic sequels to that first adventure. If you played the initial episode relatively straight, you'll be able to squeeze more emotional range from the concept. Make the Crew's doppelgängers genuinely creepy and nasty. Use them to play up Crew members' flaws in a way that makes the players just a little bit uncomfortable.

The Mirror Universe can do other interesting things for your game. Did your players maneuver you into a position where you had no choice but to kill off your favorite antagonist? Now that he's gone, do they grudgingly miss their arch-enemy? The Mirror Universe provides the solution to your problem. Just introduce the mirror counterpart of their late foe; naturally, this version is even more deceptive, tricky, and ruthless than the one from the standard universe.

Don't restrict this trick to the Crew's enemies. Use appearances by mirror characters to confront Crew members with personal conflicts. The episode "Shattered Mirror [DS9]" does this when it introduces Sisko to the mirror version of his late wife, Jennifer.



THE MIRROR UNIVERSE SERIES

Some Narrators experience problems getting their regular roleplaying groups to adopt the spirit of *Star Trek*. If your players started out with other roleplaying games, they may find it hard to break old habits—especially if their formative games focused heavily on fighting enemies and taking their loot. Some players roleplay to feel powerful and to enjoy a fantasy of irresponsibility. In an imaginary world, their fictional characters can run roughshod over other, equally non-existent characters. They don't have to follow orders, suck up insults, or accept limitations on their behavior.

They may also let off steam in the direction of their fellow players. Some players enjoy having their characters steal from other PCs, or play humiliating practical jokes on them. Humorous arguments between players can turn into deadly fights between their characters. Most Narrators, no matter what the game, hate it when fights break out within the player character group. It takes the focus off the adventure, often stopping the action completely while the combatants wait to heal up after their fight. It also makes the story seem ridiculous: the main characters on adventure TV shows don't enter lethal combat against one another at the drop of a petty insult.

This style of play flies in the face of everything *Star Trek* is about. *Star Trek* extols the virtues of cooperation. Starfleet officers act together for the good of all. They only rarely refuse orders, and when they do, it's the dramatic center of the movie or episode. Crew members don't fight one another. They don't betray each other, casually or otherwise. They value discipline over anarchic freedom of action. The Federation has abolished greed; its people don't work for money, let alone steal or connive for it.

So, the player whose chief interest is cathartic mayhem and rebellion and who doesn't care if his character is sympathetic may have a hard time playing a standard Starfleet character. Nonetheless, he might enjoy watching the television shows and knows the setting well. He doesn't mind watching noble characters on TV; he just can't make himself play one in your game. A Mirror Universe series is tailor-made for him. He gets to mix Klingons and phasers with his weekly jolt of vicarious anarchy.

Even players perfectly capable of portraying honorable, disciplined Starfleet officers may remember earlier days when they roleplayed in this free-for-all style. They may enjoy a nostalgic excursion back to a simpler gaming style. On the other hand, players who've never known anything but even-tempered, sympathetic characters in games free of nonsensical betrayals and piratical conduct face new roleplaying challenges. Advise

them to think of your upcoming series as *I Claudius* with transporters, or *Dallas* with Vulcans.

Your task, as Narrator, is to keep a continuing Mirror Universe series entertaining, even though it breaks many of the rules of fiction. The lead characters may not be sympathetic. You may be rooting for them to fail, horrified by their goals. They may not live very long, creating a constant rotation in your cast.

The Wheel of Comeuppance

A Mirror Universe series is essentially a darkly humorous soap opera with science fiction elements and action-adventure sequences. Soap opera audiences root for the good characters but can't help finding the manipulative or conflicted ones much more enthralling. Bad guys act out all of the dark impulses we must suppress to live together in a civilized society, and do it gleefully, with a sense of bravado. We vicariously enjoy their freedom, but at the same time yearn for them to be punished and to have their misused freedom taken away from them. We love to see a villain get his comeuppance, and the downtrodden good character enjoy a last-minute reversal of fortune. Still, no one likes to see an engaging villain kept down for long. We want to see him escape from imprisonment, throw off the shackles of madness, or recover from his injuries, in order to come back and once more threaten established order with his greed for absolute freedom.

In a world without good guys, where all of the characters are bad to one degree or another, our sympathies shift with the position of underdog. We don't like to see vibrant, powerful characters humiliated and deprived of the ability to act, even if they behaved despicably when they were on top. We want them to strike back at their tormentors, claw their way back to the top, get revenge—and then overstep themselves, bringing about another richly-deserved comeuppance and another descent into humiliation. Once humbled, we start to root for the character again, and the cycle begins once more.

Remember to juggle events in the game to keep the Conspirators moving through the cycle. If the plots aren't moving, you need to shake things up. No player wants his character to remain mired in humiliating defeat for session after session. Nobody should have a character so invulnerable that he's forever perched atop the hill.

Stages on the Wheel

Each plotter starts at one position on the wheel, in the stages listed below. Through the progress of plots and plans, the character slowly inches up toward the next stage, and the next, and the next. At last, the character finds himself at the top of the food chain—only to become the target of the next-lower plotter, in a fall that drops him back into the beginnings, where he once again schemes for vengeance and a rise to power.

The Plot Is Afoot. This is the neutral position from which all Conspirators begin the game. They have—or should have—plans to elevate themselves. They may have resources, alliances, contacts, technologies, a fortress, a ship, or other items needed to execute that plan. However, they haven't put the plan in motion yet. This represents the first step upward from a previous humiliating defeat.

Victory Is Nigh. The Conspirator is moving up in the Galaxy, taking advantage of the successful execution of his plan—or the intervention of blind, idiot happenstance. He hasn't achieved his goals yet, but they're within reach.

Gloating Triumph. The Conspirator has successfully consummated his grand plan of the moment. His enemies are dead or suffering humiliating defeat. People who once scorned him now flock to his side, offering alliances and currying favor. Nothing could possibly sour this moment of supreme victory—except…

Over-Reaching. The Conspirator grows bored with his triumph. You can only gloat and enjoy the fruits of victory for so long. He looks for new ways to expand his power. He sees that unexpected obstacles lie before him, but, driven by restlessness, can't resist risking his position. He assembles resources, alliances and so on in pursuit of a new and chancy goal.

The Worm Turns. The Conspirator suffers a reversal and plucks defeat from the jaws of victory. His humilated enemies climb their way up the wheel of comeuppance and smite him down. Surprise developments blindside him. The people he stepped on as he ascended the wheel now show up to speed his final descent.

Humiliating Defeat. All of the Conspirator's former glories and achievements go for naught as he suffers a terrible and mortifying fate. Triumphant foes strip him of all he worked for. He's enslaved, tortured, maimed, or otherwise degraded. His enemies laugh as he shakes his fist and vows bitter revenge. But in doing so, they're themselves beginning to overreach. One day the wheel will again turn, the Conspirator will be freed from his shameful position, and the plot will once again be afoot.

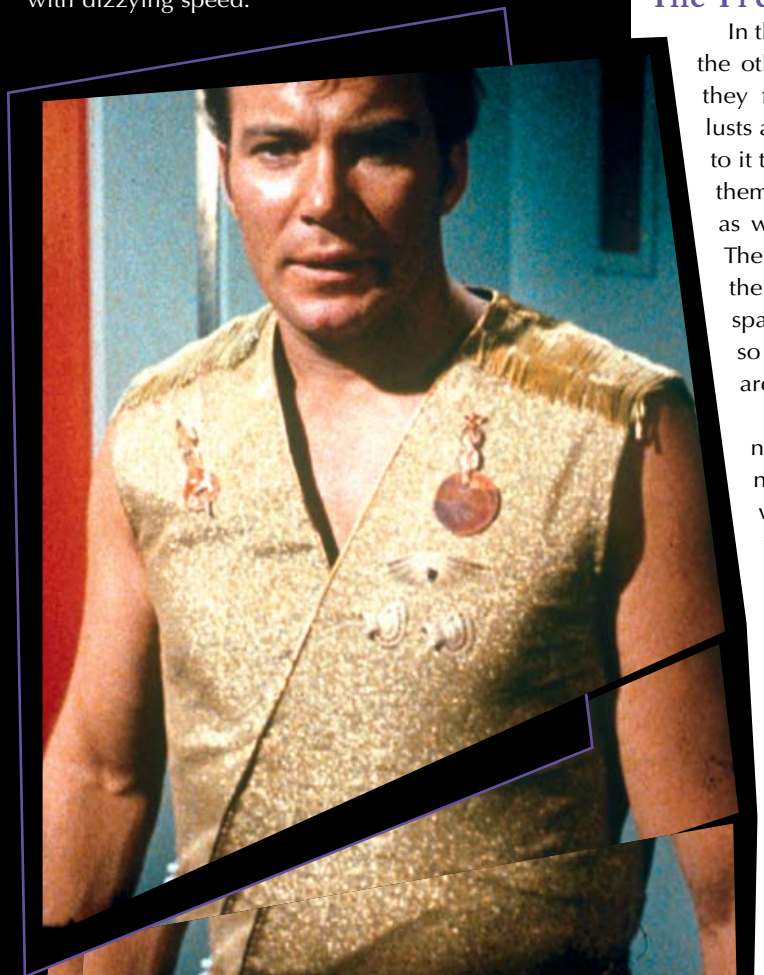
Moving Backward

Conspirators don't always move neatly along the wheel in clockwise fashion. They can suffer reversals at any time that send them backward. A Conspirator just released from prison might be discovered assembling the resources for revenge against his captors and imprisoned again, moving from **the plot is afoot** back to **humiliating defeat**. A Conspirator may be in the throes of **gloating triumph** when he discovers a last-minute obstacle he hadn't anticipated: he's back to the verge of success, on the **victory is nigh** space.

Pace of Movement

Conspirators don't skip steps, but can move through them very quickly. An unlucky Conspirator might get to gloat for only a scene or two before he overreaches and then sees the worm turn.

Try to structure events so that the pace of movement through the wheel varies from session to session. If all Conspirators move multiple steps in the course of each session, you're going too fast. Your players won't have time to feel the emotional impact of their characters' continually changing fates. Glacial movement isn't good either; players get bored if all Conspirators remain mired in one stage of the wheel for many sessions at a time. So mix things up; interweave sessions of gridlock, where each change in stage requires mammoth effort on the part of all concerned, with periodic lightning-paced episodes in which the wheel spins with dizzying speed.



Structures of Treachery

There are two basic structures for Mirror Universe series. Before you start, ask your players which one they're interested in.

The Sodality Series

In this model, the Conspirators belong to a sodality (see p. 35), a group of individuals who have sworn absolute loyalty to one another. Just like a standard universe Crew, they don't betray each other. They work together to accomplish a group goal.

The advantage of this model is that it's familiar. The Conspirators may be operating in a sinister universe, but they stick together, just like a regular Crew. In a relentlessly hostile world, they can at least depend on other sodality members. Their mutual loyalty acts as a redeeming feature that makes their characters seem at least partially sympathetic, and worth rooting for.

Familiarity also serves you, the Narrator. You learn the Conspirators' goal and create adventures in which they face obstacles to that goal. By introducing one discrete episode after another, you control the pace. You know where the broader story arc of the series is headed.

In a sodality series, the Conspirators all navigate along the stages of comeuppance together The wheel is a supplement to the standard three-act structure for adventures, not a replacement for it.

The Free For All Series

In the Free For All, each player squares off against the others as they compete for power. Even when they form temporary alliances, each Conspirator lusts after his own set of goals. As Narrator, you see to it that their goals are mutually exclusive, forcing them to do covert battle with one another as well as with an array of Supporting Cast do-badders. The Conspirators each get their own tokens on the Wheel of Comeuppance. Keep them evenly spaced throughout its steps whenever possible, so that some Conspirators are up while others are down.

The advantage of this model is that it's novel, offering challenging new ways of running a roleplaying game. Instead of scenes in which all players participate, most sequences feature one or two Conspirators. Players of other Conspirators watch and enjoy as the character(s) central to those scenes scheme their way up the Wheel of Comeuppance, or try to forestall their inevitable slide down to defeat.

Soap Structure

Like a film editor, you "cut" from one scene to another. When you reach a cliff-hanger—or a pause where the active player

doesn't know what to do next—shift focus to another Conspirator and his ongoing element of the storyline. Again, think of the soap opera as your model. Each episode of a soap opera develops a number of storylines in parallel, crossing one into the other only occasionally.

The great thing about this setup from the Narrator's point of view is that you need to do very little in the way of preparation to create a series and keep it rolling. Structured adventures come into play rarely, if at all. Forget the three-act structure; instead you've got a number of parallel stories to advance a little at a time.

The players control the types of events that occur in your series. They'll have goals to pursue and plans to execute. All you have to do is decide how the other characters and forces in the Mirror Universe react to their initiatives. As long as the reactions you describe are reasonably consistent with the setting, and provide enough challenge to the Conspirators to put the outcome of any action in doubt, you're doing your job. In scenes where Conspirators' plans overlap, you may even find yourself leaning back in your chair busting a gut as the entire game is given over to hilarious exchanges between player characters. Don't worry that you've lost control; this is exactly the sort of effect you should be shooting for!

When scenes start to flag or fall flat, just look at the stages of comeuppance and figure out which Conspirator is due for a change. Introduce a plotline designed to move that Conspirator in the desired direction. Don't make the outcome a foregone conclusion, though. An especially clever player should be able to reverse a reversal, surprising everyone by turning crisis into triumph. Likewise, a Conspirator who does something obviously doomed to fail can move backward on the wheel, even though you meant for them to jump ahead a step.

If you're not used to improvising, you may want to create an additional tool to help you chart out story possibilities. Before starting a session, make a chart listing the Conspirators, their goals, their current wheel positions, and possible developments of their storylines this episode. The result, which we'll refer to as your *key chart,* might look like Table 15.1 (see below).

Narrative Irony and Detachment

While you could send all of the players with "offstage" characters into another room while you run scenes, that isn't much fun. Most players would spend the majority of the session banished to the kitchen. Instead, allow players to follow the other storylines. They in turn must sequester their knowledge as players from what their characters know. You might think that this is a drawback in a game where the player characters may be actively conspiring against one another, but actually it adds to the fun. It encourages players to view their characters with a sense of detachment. This is a good thing, seeing as their characters are, most likely, reprehensible wretches. The detachment gives you the sense of black humor you need to make a Mirror Universe series fun over the long run. Many times the players will be able to see the impending comeuppance of a Conspirator long before the character himself knows what's coming to him. They—including the Conspirator's player—know everything that's going on. In other words, they get to enjoy the game as an audience, as well as being participants. In fiction, we call the enjoyment the audience derives from knowing what the characters don't *narrative irony*. Detachment and narrative irony are the lifeblood of this type of series. Players have to enjoy seeing their own characters royally screwed over from time to time—though naturally it'll be the mortifying kind of enjoyment you get from watching an *I Love Lucy* episode knowing Lucy is getting herself into terrible trouble once again. Though, of course, in this example, Lucy is a Betazoid mind-bender, the trouble involves a twelve-legged Vulcan cobra, and the consequences are much more severe than a scolding from Ricky.

TABLE 15.1 KEY CHART FOR I.S.S. STALIN SERIES

Conspirator (Player)	Goal	Wheel Position	Possible Developments
Captain Natalie Pays (Bruce)	Avenge her father's death	Over-reaching	New officer aboard her ship is cousin to her father's killer
			Her first officer thinks of betraying her and taking her place
Uvoc (Allen)	Commit acts of sabotage to win status	Humiliating Defeat	Escape from Thuvran's clutches
			Find allies among the Gorn
Thuvran (Caroline)	Corner the market in orgone energy	Gloating Triumph	Rival sabotages her orgone box, allowing Uvoc's escape
			Senator Carpenter discovers her embezzlement
Senator A. Carpenter (Daria)	Become most influential Senator	Gloating Triumph	Discovers that his bank accounts have been raided
			Grand Nagus calls in his loan (put up to it by Sarek?)

Secrets and Threats

A free for all works best when the Conspirators are in conflict with one another. Although they shouldn't only be battling each other—otherwise you'll soon have a scene resembling the end of *Hamlet*, and big chunks of session time devoted to creating new characters—struggles between players make for memorable sequences. Here's a technique to build connections between Conspirators to heighten their inevitable clashes.

After character creation, write the names of the Conspirators down on index cards. Create two sets for each character. Mark one set *threat* and the other *secret*. Distribute one of each type to each player, making sure that nobody gets his own Conspirator's name. Have each player describe his character to the others, so they have enough information to do the following:

Each player uses the cards to add to his Conspirator's background. He takes the character named on the *threat* card and figures out why his Conspirator should fear him. The subject needn't know how he threatens the Conspirator.

The player then invents a secret about the character listed on the other card. It is something of great import to that character, but the Conspirator knows it and he doesn't.

Vet the answers to each question to make sure that they don't totally alter a player's conception of his character. For example, a player can't decide that somebody else's character is secretly another species, or an impostor claiming a false identity.

Conspirators keep these facts close to their vests until an opportune moment arises during play. Each has a couple of aces in the hole to use in their struggle against the others. As with any secret weapon, players must calculate the best moment to use them. If they use them quickly and then find a better use for a secret or threat, they may regret not having saved it. But if they get killed with both still in hand, that's a waste, too.

Example of Free For All Play

You have a few minutes before players start to arrive for another session of your 23rd-century Mirror Universe series. If you were running a regular game, you'd need to prepare a whole adventure. Here you need only recall existing plotlines and think of entertaining ways to advance them. You do this knowing that the players may surprise you and go off in entirely different directions anyway. You make your key chart (see p. XX) and place tokens on the Wheel of Comeuppance as they were at the end of last session. Remembering what was happening last time, you pick the most interesting scene as the one to start with this week.

In this case, the choice is obvious: two Conspirators, Thuvran and Senator Carpenter, were about to kill a third, Uvoc, by subjecting him to the orgone extraction process (p. 71). You lead with Uvoc's daring escape, as he moves up on the Wheel of Comeuppance and his tormentors move down. (Bruce, who plays a Conspirator far from the scene, watches as you play out the escape, laughing at the funny parts. Unless his character, Natalie, later learns of these events, Bruce can't use his knowledge of this sequence in the game.) Uvoc makes it to a shuttlecraft bay, dives inside one of the waiting craft, and finds it full of Gorn. On this surprise development, you cut away to Bruce's character and her plotline. Uvoc's player, Allen, gets to bite his nails waiting to find out what's up with the Gorn, at the same time as he sits back and enjoys Natalie's travails.

"Meanwhile," you say, "on the *I.S.S. Stalin*… When we last saw Natalie, she'd discovered Ensign Mann's family connection to Commander Weston, who killed her father."

"Never mind that," replies Bruce. "I've been thinking about the so-called Tholian we met in the bar three episodes back. I think he knows where that cache of ludugial gold is. I order the helmsman to lay in a course for Starbase 6."

Because the player has introduced a new goal for his player, you set aside your plans to advance the shipboard intrigue plotline this session. You cast your mind back to the Tholian incident and quickly think up a new set of obstacles to challenge Captain Pays as she quests for ludugial gold.

When her sequence reaches a cliffhanger or lull, you'll cut back to Uvoc and the Gorn; he moves from *humiliating defeat* to the *plot is afoot* when he learns that the Gorn are on his side. You advance that scene until it hits a cliffhanger or pause, then move on to Thuvran and Carpenter. Their players want to pursue Uvoc, so you follow that story thread and hold the "Carpenter discovers Thuvran's embezzlement" idea in abeyance until things get boring. You'll use it when you figure the two characters need a good shaking up.

Thus, with the help of the players and their goals for the Conspirators, your game almost runs itself.

Managing the Body Count

On television, Mirror Universe episodes take advantage of the opportunity to kill off major characters—that is, their mirror equivalents—on a regular basis. The setting certainly establishes the killing of rivals as a common route to power. However, what works for an occasional Mirror Universe episode in a standard series poses problems over the long run of a Mirror-only game. It's hard to develop an emotional connection to a series if the characters routinely die like flies before you even get to know them. Every Conspirator's death should mean something to the player group. Each should be a surprising, intense development in your series.

Curses, Foiled Again

When characters you control threaten Conspirators, use the conventions of pulp fiction to keep them alive. In classic adventure storytelling, villains always seem to find a reason to keep heroes alive for a while before trying to kill them—giving them time to escape. Captured Conspirators may be kept around to test a new death trap, for use in medical experiments, or to be interrogated for information. Their captors may simply be overconfident and want to gloat before finishing them off.

Supposedly impregnable prisons never are. Don't put a Conspirator into a trap you can't think of at least one way out of. (If players dream up equally good ways to get out, allow those to work, too, so long as their characters succeed at appropriate tests.) Elaborate death traps are usually badly-tested prototypes with crucial engineering flaws. Guards can be tricked, bribed, or just plain overpowered. Other sodality members can work to free captives as they languish in the enemy citadel. Although you don't want to over-rely on it, the surprise rescue by Narrator characters always provides a handy last resort when Conspirators just can't seem to escape on their own. This works best if the nature of the rescuers surprises the Conspirator by introducing a new element to the story, as in the "shuttlecraft full of Gorn" incident in the example of play above.

Allow Conspirators reasonable chances to evade assassination attempts. Keep TNs modest for Conspirators as they sniff out poisons, hear intruders' footsteps or spot sabotaged transporter units. Advise players to invest early and often in the Miraculous Survival edge (see p. 138).

Every now and then you can use exotic means to bring back a Conspirator from certain death. The Galaxy crawls with god-like entities for whom a timely resurrection requires little effort. Naturally, the Metrons or priests of Q expect something in return after reviving a Conspirator's corpse. The Genesis Weapon reversed Spock's premature demise; other exotic technologies can do the same for your Conspirators. Just make sure that the Conspirators never get their hands on a reliable, repeatable method of bringing themselves back from the dead.

Conspirator vs. Conspirator

It's much harder for you to keep Conspirators alive when the people who wish to kill them are other Conspirators. You can't force your players to abide by genre conventions and deliberately make mistakes to give their colleagues a break. If a player is determined to kill another's character, he's eventually going to succeed. (If the victim has stacked up multiples of the Miraculous Survival edge, he may have to do it several times, but he'll do it just the same.)

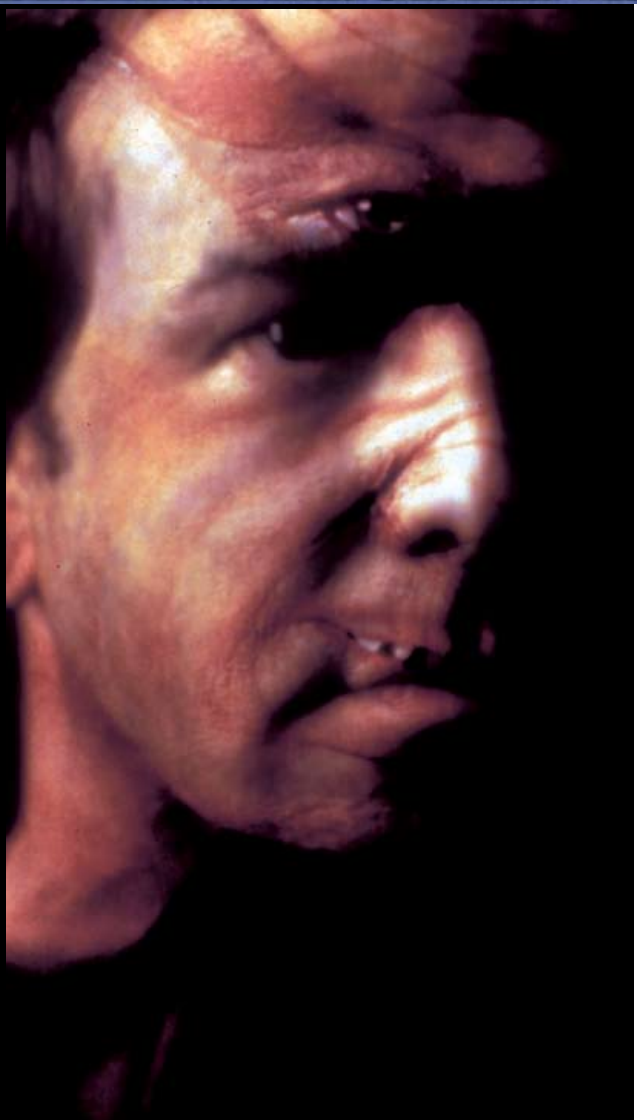
The trick, then, is to give Conspirators in-game reasons not to regularly kill fellow player characters. Engineer the plot so that the Conspirators' goals require the continued good health of the other Crew members they most hate. Make sure that there are negative consequences to any poorly thought-out murder. A Conspirator may have friends in high places who'll push his killer back down the Wheel of Comeuppance. A too-bold killing might offend local Security officials.

Advise Conspirators how to protect themselves from murder by other player characters. Tell them to cultivate allies, set aside credits for posthumous revenge funds, and squirrel away files containing damaging information on their enemies for release after their deaths.

Make players (not characters) aware of another genre convention of Machiavellian soap opera: when you dispatch one enemy, another, slightly more powerful one always arrives to take his place. We simulate this convention through the following rule: when a Conspirator is slain by another player character, his player creates a new character as normal. Then, before entering play, he awards himself, and spends, a number of experience points equal to the total accumulated experience of his murdered character, plus 20%. (Make sure that you keep a grand total of all experience awarded to each Conspirator for easy reference.) Slap down any player who volunteers to have his Conspirator killed by another in hopes of earning free experience points. Allow the murder to take place, then require the player to construct a character using only the normal rules, with no added experience.

Remind players that it's perfectly acceptable for them to create new characters bent on avenging the deaths of their old ones. By doing so, they add coherence to your story; the new Conspirator is already connected to established events. (This is sort of like replacing Jadzia with a new host for the Dax symbiont.) More importantly, this practice provides a deterrent to Conspirators who want to kill other player characters. They'll still do it, but only when it really makes sense in the story. Casual killings just to rib or annoy another player become too costly when you know an improved character, probably tailor-designed to address your own Conspirator's particular vulnerabilities, will try to kill yours immediately afterwards.

In some groups, this rule will temporarily encourage more blood-letting, It sets up a cycle of revenge, as characters pump themselves up by getting killed and then go on to slay their murderers, whose own replacements promptly continue the mayhem. Most players will bore of this quickly, allowing you to get back to a more coherent series. If they find it endlessly entertaining, you can either ask them to lay off, or switch to another *Star Trek Roleplaying Game* series that doesn't draw out their lunatic instincts. Unless, of course, you're equally tickled by that sort of thing.



Redeeming Virtues

Another way to make your series more satisfying for long-term play is to encourage players to invest their characters with redeeming virtues. Just as a character in a standard series seems boring if he's completely without flaws, a Conspirator without a single positive trait is too one-dimensional to care about.

Here are a few redeeming virtues to suggest to your players:

Love. The Conspirator is motivated by romantic passion. He may seek conquest to appease his lover. He may protect a hidden object of desire who embodies a purity and innocence almost unknown in the Galaxy. He may be tortured by unrequited love, seeking domination over others as a distraction from his emotional pain.

Vengeance. Although the Conspirator's actions may be at times despicable, he's driven by a need to avenge himself against another who committed much worse acts against him.

Idealism. The Conspirator genuinely believes that his actions will make life better for people. His beliefs may be laudable, but doomed; for example, he could be an Oswaldite. Or he might follow a less sympathetic ideology, but with sincere fervor.

Honesty. The character may do all sorts of nasty things, but he never lies. His honesty, though sometimes cruel, is unswerving.

Loyalty. The Conspirator will happily backstab anyone who gets in his way—except for one individual or group, for whom he's ready to die, if necessary.

Patriotism. The character believes in his home culture and rigidly follows its ideals. Even when his compatriots eagerly toss aside ancient mores in the pursuit of momentary advantage, he'd sooner lose out than contravene them.

Striking the Right Tone

The more you use the Mirror Universe, the campier your treatment of it will probably become. "Evil twin" episodes have been used so many times on TV series and in other media in the years since "Mirror, Mirror" first aired that the concept's comic possibilities are hard to resist. Indeed, the arc of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* Mirror Universe episodes started out reasonably seriously, but over time gave themselves up to the arch gusto of Nana Visitor's performance as kinky Mirror Kira. The final Mirror Universe episode, "The Emperor's New Cloak," used the setting as fodder for a Ferengi-centered comic relief episode played as broad farce.

In a way, you may need to make the Mirror Universe humorous if it's the setting for a whole a series, or even a bunch of episodes in a standard game. Its implications are otherwise too grim and depressing. Black humor allows us to enjoy the posturing of arch-villainous versions of recognizable characters, without focusing too much on the slavery, oppression, and mass murder lurking in the setting's background.

A Glimmer of Hope

One syndrome that sometimes bogs down conspiratorial games is player hopelessness. Because so many different forces are arrayed against the Conspirators, some players grow discouraged and find themselves paralyzed when it comes time to make a decision. They see disaster as the only possible outcome of every option. Remember that even though you know your villains' weaknesses, the players don't. You may need to periodically remind the players that their Conspirators are the main characters in a world of treacherous adventure and therefore have what it takes to routinely overcome impossible odds. They won't win by a cakewalk, but they aren't doomed, either. The Mirror Universe belongs to the bold, not the indecisive. Have Narrator characters remind the Conspirators of this every so often. They can list the many times in Terran history when a desperate, spur-of-the-moment decision won an Emperor his throne.

If your players lose hope, fine-tune your handling of the Wheel of Comeuppance. Allow them to savor victories a little longer. Let them relish their paybacks; allow the occasional harebrained scheme to succeed brilliantly. Don't be too heavy-handed with the details of humiliating defeat. For the Conspirators, the wheel always goes back up.

Series Types

If you're nervous about the wide range of possible Conspirator actions in a Mirror Universe series, you may want to limit players to certain types of characters. Here are some possible themes for a narrow-focus series.

To Seek Out New Life Forms And Kill Them

All characters start out as 23rd-century Starfleet officers serving aboard the same vessel. They may belong to a sodality of brother officers, sworn to help one another. If so, your series is much like a standard one. The Conspirators encounters a new threat every episode, which is structured according to the three-act model. However, instead of upholding the values of the Federation, Imperial Starfleet officers follow orders to the extent they must and spend the rest of the time pursuing their own agendas. The first thing Conspirators think of when they meet a new species is whether or not they should attack it. Unless they have a specific reason to keep opponents alive, they leave their phasers on kill. Alien cultures may be interfered with for profit or just for the heck of it. After defeating an antagonist who happens to be another Starfleet officer, the Crew can summarily execute him—assuming he has no powerful friends back at headquarters. Looting follows any successful combat engagement. A captain's success is gauged by the amount of booty he seizes and distributes to his crew.

A free-for-all game follows the same rules of engagement, except that all of the Conspirators covet the captain's chair. They wait for their superiors make mistakes, so they can report them to headquarters, have them killed, and take their place in the chain of command. Officers regard their underlings with equal suspicion. They assign unduly ambitious rivals to suicide missions, expose their inevitable infractions of Starfleet code, or trump up charges against them. You may declare this a limited series with a specific victory condition: the first Conspirator to become captain "wins" the series. Or you may continue as Conspirators connive for command of a better ship, then scheme their way up the ranks of the admiralty and into the War Ministry.

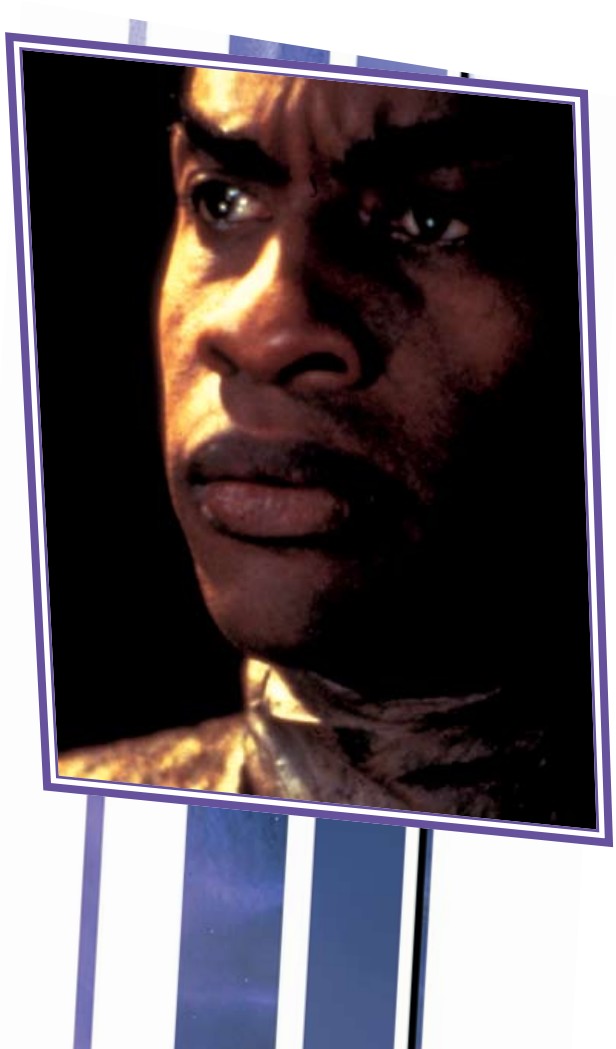
Green Peril

Most or all of the Conspirators in this 23rd-century series are Vulcans. Portray T'Pau as clearly being the Empire's true great power. Conspirators may follow her or struggle against her. Mentally "mirroring" the information about Vulcan culture can give the Narrator and players a lot of directions for a Green Peril series; here are three potential bearings to chart course for.

In the first series, Conspirators vie with other factions of Vulcans to win T'Pau's favor and avoid her wrath. As one of her action teams, Conspirators must carry out their assigned objectives while carefully maintaining the illusion that the Humans are still in charge. A frequent adversary might be that strangely idealistic son of Senator Sarek. Can the Crew stop Spock from ruining T'Pau's carefully stage-managed conspiracy?

Alternatively, Conspirators might belong to a sodality from Yevok's Vulcan Underground—see p. 89. They pretend to serve T'Pau, but in fact work to loosen her hold on power. They want Spock to become ruler of Vulcan—and, by extension, the Empire. They fear exposure by T'Pau, as well as the machinations of Spock's many other enemies within the Empire.

Or the Conspirators could be free agents with feet in both T'Pau and Spock's camps. They obey Yevok when it suits them, while gathering evidence against him. They wait to see which way the wind blows in the T'Pau-Spock struggle, ready to step in to help rule Vulcan when the identity of the victor becomes clear.



Corporate Snakes and Ladders

The Conspirators are all employees of the same 23rd century corporation, such as Keeler Aerospace. (See p. 29 for some other suitable corporations.) Conspirators struggle against fellow employees, corporate spies from other firms, and rapacious Revenue Ministry officials. They travel to distant branch plants to track down saboteurs and stifle labor unrest. They spy on rival corporations and try to steal technologies from them, or from independent researchers, the Science Ministry, or alien species. They measure success by the size of their offices, the amount of money they earn and embezzle, and the number of staff members they command. Top executives engage in insider trading, plot hostile takeovers of other firms, and negotiate the terms of their defections to rival companies. Meanwhile, characters navigate the even more treacherous waters of their exotic personal lives, juggling spouses, mistresses, and objects of temporary affection. A sodality seeks to make one of its members CEO of the corporation. In a free for all game, each Conspirator lusts for the CEO's office suite.

To truly emulate the genre, tell the players to create characters who are all members of the same family. In this free-for-all, Conspirators struggle for control of the family firm and their own libidos. They manipulate one another through a network of servants, shady business associates, handsome tennis instructors, black-sheep cousins, illegitimate children, and long-lost relations. For this type of series, each Conspirator holds two threats and two secrets (p. 146).

It's All About The Credits

The Conspirators belong to a sodality of mercenaries, owing loyalty only to one another and the almighty credit. In the 23rd century, many Senators, CEOs, and gangsters have occasion to hire armed strike teams. In the 24th century, power players within the Alliance do the same.

The Crew freelances, avoiding dangerous ties to any one client. Small operations include kidnapping, murder, and sabotage. Mercenaries might be hired to steal specific items, from art treasures to secret files. If they have a ship or command large numbers of ground forces, they may be called upon to fight in the many localized wars that break out in the various Empires' distant corners. One month they might fight for an Empire; the next, for a beleaguered alien world fending off Imperial invasion.

A hard-pressed power might even call on the Conspirators to fight in its major battles. The Terrans hired mercenaries to augment Starfleet during its waning days, from 2288 to 2297. As they were suffering from an economic collapse at the time, they sometimes hired more mercenary ships than they could pay, hoping that many of them would be wiped out in battle before presenting a final invoice.

Down These Mean Spacelanes

The Conspirators operate a private investigation agency. They may be underhanded sneaks gleefully snooping for the universe's most sinister men, or cynical moralists who manage to co-exist with the Galaxy's evildoers without themselves becoming tarnished or afraid. They trail adulterers, root out evidence to aid falsely-accused defendants, and solve murders no one but the client cares about. Clients include wealthy eccentrics, wronged lovers, corpulent insurance company executives, and abashed blackmail victims. During the typical investigation, Conspirators interact with gangsters, stool pigeons, Orion cultists, exotically-muscled goons, flat-footed secret policemen, decadent party-goers, and the nymphomaniac daughters of influential tycoons. They can expect to be lied to, threatened, knocked out, shot at, seduced, and occasionally spat on. They do it for a standard fee plus expenses, and perhaps for the knowledge that, ultimately, in a Galaxy of deception and madness, they serve the truth.

All the Emperor's Men

This series resembles "Corporate Snakes and Ladders," except that the Conspirators all work for the Imperial Bureaucracy in Washington (23rd century version) or the Alliance administration on Qo'noS (24th century version). They strive against fellow government officials (and, in a free for all game, one another) in the vicious quest for promotions, graft, and influence. They use Security agents under their command (or

control) to investigate, harass, and even kill their rivals. Now and then they must break from their scheming to fulfill the actual duties of their department. These assignments put them in conflict with legislators, military officers, and businessmen. Conspirators must also beware the countless alien spies who riddle their agencies, as well as the occasional energy being or space parasite roaming the corridors of power.

Mr. Oxmyx Goes To Washington

The Conspirators serve as staffers to a 23rd-century Senator. They work behind the scenes to build alliances with other Senators, and to discredit their boss' political rivals. Sometimes they have to leave Washington to perform delicate tasks for the Senator's patrons. They stay on guard against those who would try to assassinate, blackmail, or kidnap their Senator. At the same time, they deploy intimidation, bribery, and the occasional outright murder against the weak Senators' staffers to coerce votes for favored legislation.

The ultimate goal of any staffer is to become a Senator himself. In his quest, he may work to destroy the careers of other staffers, jump ship to the staff of a more powerful Senator, or betray his boss on the Emperor's behalf. Once a Senator, he must balance the demands of his patrons for favors with his own desire for graft. He'll also immediately join the jockeying for position of Emperor-In-Waiting. He may support another candidate who he hopes will help him once he seizes the throne, or go for the whole bowl of plomeek soup himself.

Once Emperor, he must fend off all of the other would-be Emperors, setting them against one another and pretending to be everyone's friend. He bribes those who accept his favor, and subverts or assassinates those who can't be bought. In the few moments he can spare from constant intrigue in Washington, he may turn his attention to intergalactic affairs and the Empire's many enemies. If he can't or won't pay heed to these things, that clever Spock fellow over in the Security Ministry will be only too pleased to do it for him.

Viva La Resistance

The Crew constitutes a resistance cell dedicated to the downfall of the Empire (23rd century) or Alliance (24th century). They may belong to a broader movement or operate as independents. In the course of their adventures, they sabotage government installations, rescue political prisoners, assassinate especially cruel or effective Security officers, and appropriate weapons and ships for use in the struggle. While their worst enemies are Imperial Security or *Khak'ma*/Obsidian Order counterinsurgency officers, they must also avoid the clutches of bounty hunters and misguided citizens loyal to the government. The Conspirators most likely belong to a sodality. Betrayal is for the enemy's camp—or at least something to hold off on until the revolutionaries seize power.

MYSTERIES OF THE MIRROR UNIVERSE

In this chapter, we present a number of open questions about the Mirror Universe. We suggest several possible solutions to each mystery. It's up to you, the Narrator, to decide which answer pertains in your series. For that matter, you could thwart treacherous Narrator-chapter-reading players by coming up with your own answers to the mysteries below. We recommend that you don't commit yourself to a particular solution until the Conspirators actually encounter it in play. This keeps your options open to make the best choice for your story at that time.

SPOCK

Is Spock still alive in the 24th century? Of course! How can someone as cunning and collected as Spock not have had an escape plan in mind when his ship joined what was obviously a losing battle?

The *Enterprise* wasn't destroyed at all. Spock saw the writing on the wall as the Alliance overran system after system in its implacable drive toward Earth. Working with Scotty, he amplified the power wand he'd obtained from Korob and Sylvia so that it could beam a powerful illusion light-years through subspace. Before the final invasion, the *Enterprise* positioned itself in the Rigel system. When the Alliance occupied Rigel, Spock used the wand to make his ship invisible. He sent an illusionary *Enterprise* to join the final battle for Earth. Maneuvering the illusion cleverly, he even managed to crash a Cardassian vessel into the Klingon Emperor's flagship, killing Kor and many of his top aides. He and the *Enterprise* crew then safely decamped.

The real question is what he's up to now.

Answer A: Émigré

Spock knew one hideout where no one in the Galaxy would think to seek him: the Federation Universe. Aside from his top officers aboard the *Enterprise,* no living denizens of the Mirror Universe knew about its existence. Spock had seen to that years before. He'd removed all reports on the original mirror universe incident from Imperial databases, and arranged the assassination of the small handful of intelligence analysts familiar with the files. He assigned Scotty to study the modifications to the transporter made by his Federation counterpart back in 2266. Using the same amplifier technology he'd used to alter the power wand, Scotty created an energy field that connected the two universes just long enough for the *Enterprise* to fly through it.

The utter failure of Spock's grand schemes triggered an identity crisis. He'd predicated his life on the pursuit of logic—but his logic had proven to be completely wrong. Egged on by the badgering of Dr. McCoy, he admitted that his actions had been based on Human emotion, not Vulcan logic. He pronounced himself a failure and sank into a deep depression. Other crew members experienced a similar sense of demoralization. As a group, they decided to abandon the *Enterprise*

and seek new lives in the Federation. Applying the power wand's technology one last time, Spock and Scotty designed small devices allowing the user to alter his appearance. Each crew member received a single Appearance Scrambler, as Scotty dubbed it. That way, if they discovered that their doubles were active and well-known, they could adopt new, anonymous faces. The *Enterprise* traveled through the fringes of Federation space, covertly dropping off crew members at various colonies and starbases. Spock, Sulu, Uhura, Scotty, and McCoy were the last to abandon ship. Unable to bear the thought of its destruction, they put up the shields and parked it in continuous orbit around the moon of a planet far from any inhabited worlds. Spock calculated that, barring a surprise asteroid hit, it would remain in good condition for 134 years, 15 days, 6 hours, and 19 minutes. They took a long shuttlecraft journey to the nearest Federation base and mournfully parted company. No forwarding addresses were exchanged, because nobody knew where they'd head.

Spock changed his appearance only slightly, rounding his ears and eyebrows. Having failed as a Vulcan, he would now pass himself off as Human. Over the years, he drifted from one distant outpost to another, reluctant to visit the heart of the Federation or risk an encounter with his counterpart. He let his goatee turn into a perpetual, all-over stubble. He drowned his sorrows with a variety of intoxicants.

Now a pathetic addict, he dwells on Gringus-A1, an independently-operated space station owned by a Ferengi named Gringus. The patrons of the base treat him as a sort of mascot. They know him only as "Shuffles." Somewhere in his heart of hearts he yearns to be Vulcan again, and to take the old *I.S.S. Enterprise* back to the Mirror Universe to make things right. But this won't happen until someone finds him and convinces him this is more than the pipe dream of an old derelict.

Answer B: Romulan Praetor

Spock left Sulu in command of the *Enterprise*, departing on a shuttlecraft as the ship passed through the Romulan frontier for parts unknown. Once the *Enterprise* had safely cleared the area, he sent out a distress signal. As a warbird approached, he used the illusion wand to assume the identity of a *Tal Shiar* operative called Notatek. Planning ahead as always, Spock had months before mind-melded with the real Notatek, who'd been imprisoned by the Security Ministry after a failed assassination attempt. He was thus able to perfectly imitate the man, a distant relative of the royal family. "Notatek" told of his harrowing escape from the Security Ministry during the Alliance assault on Earth. After a debriefing in which he provided the *Tal Shiar* with much accurate information on the Alliance, Spock won promotion.

Spock devoted himself to rising in the Romulan hierarchy just as he'd done in the Terran Empire. As Notatek, he came to head the *Tal Shiar*. This position gave him much influence over Romulan foreign affairs. Spock decided that the Romulans should quietly build their forces while waiting for the Alliance to sink into inevitable decadence. No more economic or social reforms for him. From now on, it would be warships, warships, warships.

Spock ran into opposition when the headstrong Prince Thabian, who wanted immediate war, became Praetor. So Spock captured Thabian and mind-melded with him. He then staged an accident in which it seemed as if Notatek was slain and Thabian injured. Spock used the power wand to assume the identity of the hereditary ruler of the Romulan Star Empire.

Now Spock sits on the Praetor's throne, patiently playing 3-D chess against the Empire's best supercomputer, waiting for the ideal moment to launch his strike. He watches as the Terran resistance grows ever stronger. The ideal moment, he knows, is coming soon.

Answer C: The Vulcan Behind the Curtain

Spock changed his identity and lives as a supposed addict named Shuffles on Gringus-A1—not in the Federation Universe, but in the Mirror one. Under this unassuming cover identity, he continues to manipulate events throughout the Galaxy—just as he did when he orchestrated the collapse of the Terran Empire and its conquest by the Alliance.

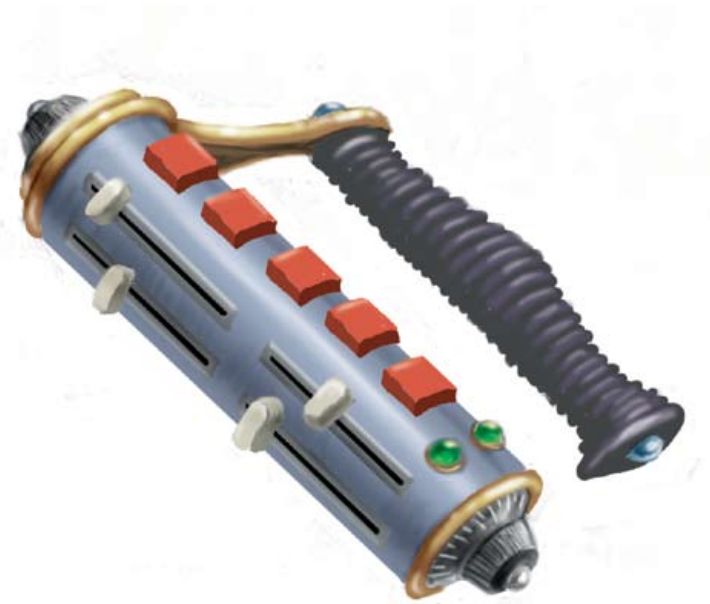
Spock knew all along that it was illogical to expect an entire ruthless Empire to suddenly become enlightened after brief experience of a handful of social and economic reforms. After his encounter with the Federation Kirk, he sat down and drew up a two-hundred-year plan to reform not just Terran society, but all of the major powers. Neither Terrans, Romulans, Cardassians, Romulans, or even Ferengi would change their ways unless first forced to taste the ashes of defeat. They will not embrace peace and mutual cooperation unless made to see that such policies form the only logical basis for survival.

By Spock's reckoning, the Terran resistance is right on schedule in its struggle against the Alliance. In a few short years the Alliance will break apart, occasioning a three-way battle between the great civilizations. All will lie in ruins at its end. Free of colonial powers, independent worlds throughout the Galaxy make their own way. Worse dictators arise, seize power, grow decadent, and face the executioner's axe. The Oswaldite movement grows on planet after planet, as people begin to see that old-style governments can never break free from the galactopolitical wheel of comeuppance. This common ideology provides the root of mutual understanding. By 2466, diplomats and

leaders form a Federation of Planets, even grander than the one Spock learned about from standard-universe Kirk. Prominent members include Terra, Cardassia Prime, Qo'nos, Romulus, Ferenginar, Bajor, and the Breen homeworld.

Spock doesn't just sit around in his fake identity watching events unfold. He makes sure that his predictions come true. During his decades in the Security Ministry, he developed a network of agents spanning the known Galaxy. Following T'Pau's modus operandi, he's seen to it that the vast majority of his agents think they're working for someone else. Even the few thousand operatives who know they work for Spock just think he's trying to regain power for himself. In the present timeline, only his trusty Ferengi aide, Gringus, knows his true agenda. Spock also enjoys the aid of descendants who have yet to be born. He's been to the 25th century, met with his grandson, Federation President Skotok, returning with technologies to help him bring that ideal future into being.

Gringus-A1 appears to be a barely-spaceworthy haven for criminals and mercenaries, but actually serves



DEVICE: APPEARANCE SCRAMBLER

An appearance scrambler enables the user to alter his look through a complex illusion that fools most being's senses of sight, touch, smell, hearing, taste, and extra-sensory awareness. The device itself is a small polymer cylinder encasing a small chip bearing alien-derived circuitry. The user need only touch the cylinder and think of the image he wants to project around himself. The effect is instantaneously activated. The quality of the illusion depends on the completeness and complexity of the user's mental command. A skilled user can fool even most basic sensor scans. Only individuals trained in its use can produce illusions of sufficient complexity to fool even a casual observer: they must have the Appearance Scrambler skill (below.)

SKILL: Appearance Scrambler (Int)

Academic; Trained

The character can use an appearance scrambler to create an illusion altering his appearance. (Because the device is exotic and the training to use it consists of a series of mental exercises, this is not a specialization of the System Operation skill. That skill provides characters no default chance of operating an appearance scrambler.)

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Concealing Objects, Large Scale, Personal Imitation

TEST: Make an opposed Test against your opponent's Observation total to conceal your appearance. A foe who bests you may realize that something is wrong, but individuals unfamiliar with the appearance scrambler and its technology only realize the full nature of the illusion on a Dramatic Success.

- **Simple (5): Changing your hair color**
- **Routine (10): Mimicking a member of another Humanoid species**
- **Challenging (15): Mimicking a specific individual whose appearance is well known to you via personal observation or study of a holographic image**
- **Difficult (20): Mimicking a non-Humanoid life form**
- **Virtually Impossible (25): Mimicking an inanimate object**

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: Extending the powers of the Appearance Scrambler to another creature or object within your line of sight imposes a +4 TN modifier per extra target. Concealing a large and/ or faraway object may increase the TN further, or even require special added technologies.

AFFINITY: The Impersonate skill grants a +1 affinity bonus, because the character already has some experience in assuming an alternative persona.

ACTION TIME: Usually full-round for a single change of appearance to the holder. Larger, more complex illusions may take several minutes.

EXTENDED TEST: no

as the nerve center of Spock's interstellar network. Using 25th century electronic monitoring equipment, Spock surveys events throughout the Galaxy. The subspace signals he sends to agents can't be intercepted with present-day technology. He equips operatives with Appearance Scramblers but avoids giving them 25th century devices for fear of their being captured and duplicated. Spock's network escapes the notice of intelligence organizations because his agents only rarely commit assassinations, acts of sabotage, or conventional espionage. The purpose of the missions Spock assigns his agents is often inscrutable. Minions may be dispatched simply to whisper a proverb in a man's ear, change a relay cable in a museum's communications grid, or see to it that an actor is replaced by an understudy. Each of these actions infinitesimally changes the way people think about their place in the world, subtly making them more serene, receptive, and understanding. Over time, these tiny changes will bring about a revolution in consciousness. Only then will the foundation for the Mirror Federation truly be laid.

Answer D: Locutus of Borg

As in the Émigré scenario, the *Enterprise* attempted escape into the standard universe. But Scotty's device failed and the ship instead ended up in the Delta Quadrant. The *Enterprise* prospered for a while, spreading Oswaldite ideas to the quadrant's many hostile cultures. Then they met the Borg. The ship and its crew escaped, but not before the Borg beamed Spock onto one of their cubes. They assimilated him, an act that changed them forever.

Although the Borg had assimilated many species steeped in spiritual or religious traditions, they'd always discarded these beliefs as being devoid of utility. However, Spock's Vulcan traditions were different. They provided the Borg a rigorous, almost mathematical form of spirituality that appealed irresistibly to their cybernetic minds. The Borg became devoted practitioners of *Kolinahr,* the Vulcan spiritual discipline. In order to enjoy the full benefits of his spiritual attainment, the Borg allowed Spock to preserve a remnant of his individual identity. They designated him Locutus of Borg. He would be their ambassador to the new species they wished to assimilate, and provide them with guidance in understanding their new beliefs.

Spock was changed, too. He accepted the logic of the Borg mission. By helping to assimilate every species in the universe into one linked, *Kolinahr*-adept consciousness, he would complete what Surak had begun. He would bring peace and order to the Galaxy, one species at a time. Individuality was the source of the greed and savagery consuming almost every species, including his own. It would be a good thing to sacrifice it.

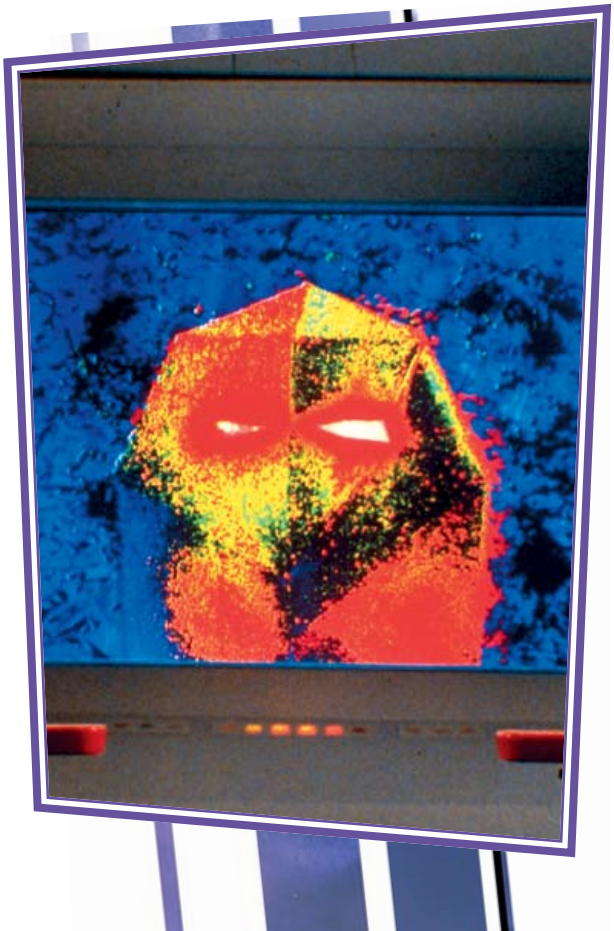
Although at first he wanted to send Borg cubes straight to the Alpha Quadrant to assimilate Vulcan and Terra, he quickly realized that this was an emotional impulse. It would be much more logical to systematically assimilate the species of the Delta Quadrant first. But that task is almost done, and soon Locutus of Borg will appear in Alliance space, ready to herald the doctrine of Infinite Diversity, Combined. Resistance is futile.

OTHER ENTERPRISE CREW MEMBERS

Each of the above scenarios leaves the fates of McCoy, Scotty and the others up to you. If any of them survived to the days of the Terran resistance, they'd be very old. But there are plenty of ways for an enterprising Starfleet officer to extend his lifespan. Among them are immortality drugs, bargains with energy beings, or interaction with temporal anomalies. Even if they've lived out their natural lifespans, the crewmembers might have left behind descendants, caches of equipment, or secret files loaded with useful information.

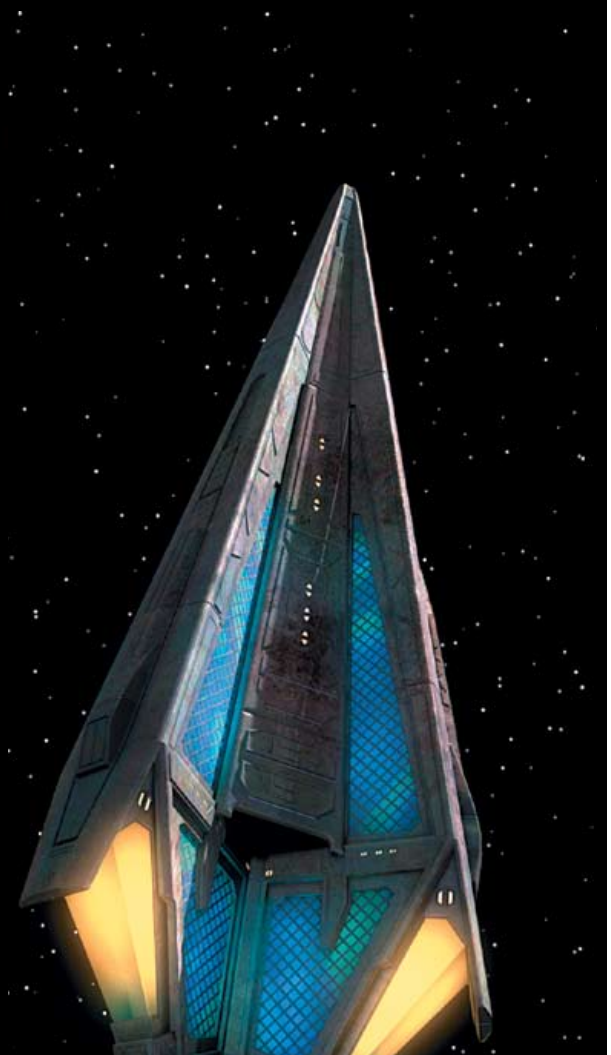
THOLIANS

Who are the Mirror Tholians, and what do they want? (See page 85 for everything known about them in the heyday of the Terran Empire. The Alliance has very little contact with them up until the Tholian War, on page 97.)



Answer A: Just Another Enemy

The obsessively territorial Tholians represent just another threat to what passes for peace and security in the Mirror Universe. In Tholian society, an individual's worth is measured by the amount of land he owns and can protect from interlopers. Landless Tholians are little more than slaves. Those with the greatest estates run the legislature, which controls the executive branch. Land on the Tholian homeworld grants much higher status than territory anywhere else. Thus the Tholians were slow to colonize, even after developing warp-capable ships. Their eventual colonies were settled by losers and outcasts. When the colonies got strong, they attacked the homeworld so that their leaders could seize land there. Civil wars raged through Tholian space until a few centuries ago, when a new compact recognized as equally valid all land occupied by Tholians for at least three decades. That still left the Tholians as isolationists with few incentives to expand past the worlds covered by this grandfather clause. They think their own world is the best imaginable, and that all other species are hopeless barbarians scarcely worth bothering with. However, the old colonies are now running out of land for ambitious young men to seize, and a new, hungry generation looks toward Alliance space and sees innumerable worlds ripe for conquest. The Tholians wait in the wings as the quadrant's up-and-coming menace.

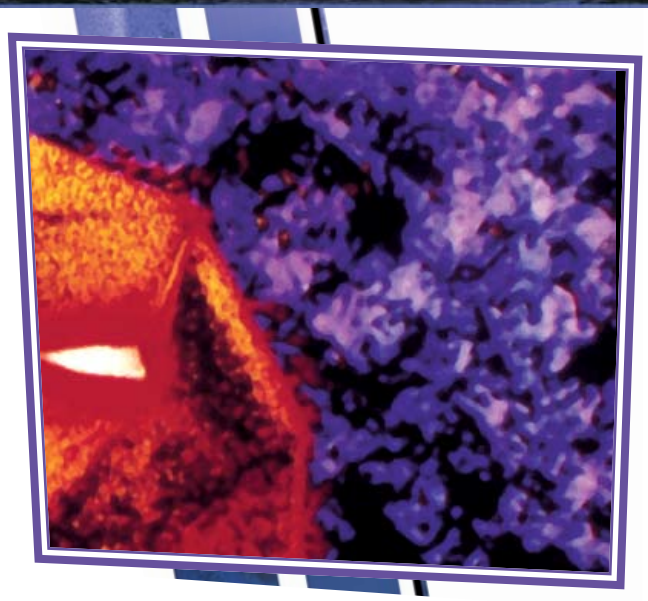


Answer B: Interphasic Tholians

There are no Mirror Tholians. The Tholians encountered by the Mirror Universe *Enterprise* are exactly the same individuals that threatened its Federation counterpart. The Tholians exist in interphasic space, a dimension that half-straddles each universe. Tholians are fiercely territorial because they can't immediately tell the difference between standard- and Mirror-universe ships entering their semi-dimension. They've been attacked by several Mirror Universe species, which they succeeded in driving off or destroying only after taking heavy casualties. With this track record, they can only afford to assume that any ships approaching their borders have mayhem in mind. The Tholians want only to be left alone, and will fight viciously to protect themselves. Unfortunately, many pirates, criminals, and renegades in both universes have begun to use the Tholian frontier as an ideal stash for equipment, loot, and even full installations. They figure they're fast and sneaky enough to avoid Tholian patrols, and that other would-be pursuers are too wary to risk clashes with the Tholian fleet. The Orion Cabal in particular has shown great interest in Tholian space, because it provides a portal to a dimension where their god is already free. Meetings between the Orion Cabal and Syndicate are already taking place, and can lead to no good for either reality. The Federation recently succeeded in making peace with the Tholians. They're just as eager as their new partners to keep the border between universes locked down. Mirror characters entering the frontier can therefore expect confrontations with the Tholians, Orions, independent ne'er-do-wells, and the Federation.

Answer C: The Hate Eaters

Tholians are in the process of evolving from biological entities to energy beings. Their bodies, ships, and equipment are only half-real. During this intermediate phase, they can no longer eat normal food, but still need some kind of sustenance to survive. They've learned to sustain themselves on the emotional background energy of the universe. Specifically, they live on the psychic energy that most species expend when they experience hate, avarice, or the impulse toward violence. Tholians feed by long distance. Close proximity to Mirror Universe residents proves overwhelming, burning their quasi-corporeal bodies. Prolonged contact can be fatal. Hence their insistence on closed borders. As in the previous scenario, Mirror Universe renegades and criminals hide out on the frontier, hoping that fear of the Tholians will shield them from their enemies. They can't use it as a gateway to the standard universe, though. Conspirators may be forced to travel there to recover items or people captured by the Orion Cabal.



If the conflict of the Mirror Universe is somehow lessened—for example, if you decide that the "Vulcan Behind the Curtain" scenario is the correct one, and Spock gets close to establishing his Mirror Federation—these Tholians will need to take counter-steps to ensure a continuing supply of hate and violence. Not wanting their food supply cut off, they'll work through intermediaries to destabilize the efforts of anyone trying to bring harmony to the universe.

Answer D: Mirrors Within Mirrors

The weird interphasic energy of Tholian space acts as a gigantic receptacle for the collective fears of the Mirror Universe's thousands of species. When people enter Tholian space, that energy works draws images from their unconscious minds and manifests them physically. These energy manifestations then do what the intruders fear most. in 2268, the *I.S.S. Defiant* crew encountered a "Tholian vessel" while trapped in one of the many dimensional sinkholes that pepper the region. Already in trouble, they most feared an encounter with a cruelly indifferent force that would make their problem worse. This manifested in the form of the Tholian ship and commander. Both were as real as the *Defiant,* at least temporarily, and its comm system was able to record the Tholian transmission. Since then, everyone who's reviewed Starfleet logs on the incident before entering Tholian space has known to fear territorial, helmeted foes. So their fears create repeat manifestations. However, each set of "Tholians" is slightly different than the last, according to the specific, collective anxieties of the crews who encounter them. The Orion Cabal, many of whose members are crazy enough to be literally fearless, maintain hideouts on the frontier, wondering why they never seem to encounter any sign of the vaunted Tholian menace.

HALKANS

Mirror Spock met Federation Kirk while on a mission to threaten the Halkans, a people with a supposed "record of total peace." How could this be the case, when the Mirror Universe is populated entirely by evil species?

Answer A: The Exception That Proves The Rule

The Halkans are telling the truth. They have enjoyed a history of total peace since their early evolution. Almost all of Mirror Universe species are more selfish and paranoid, but the Halkans are a true exception. Such species are doubly rare because as soon as they first encounter their neighbors, they show a marked tendency to get exterminated.

Answer B: Be Peaceful, Or Die

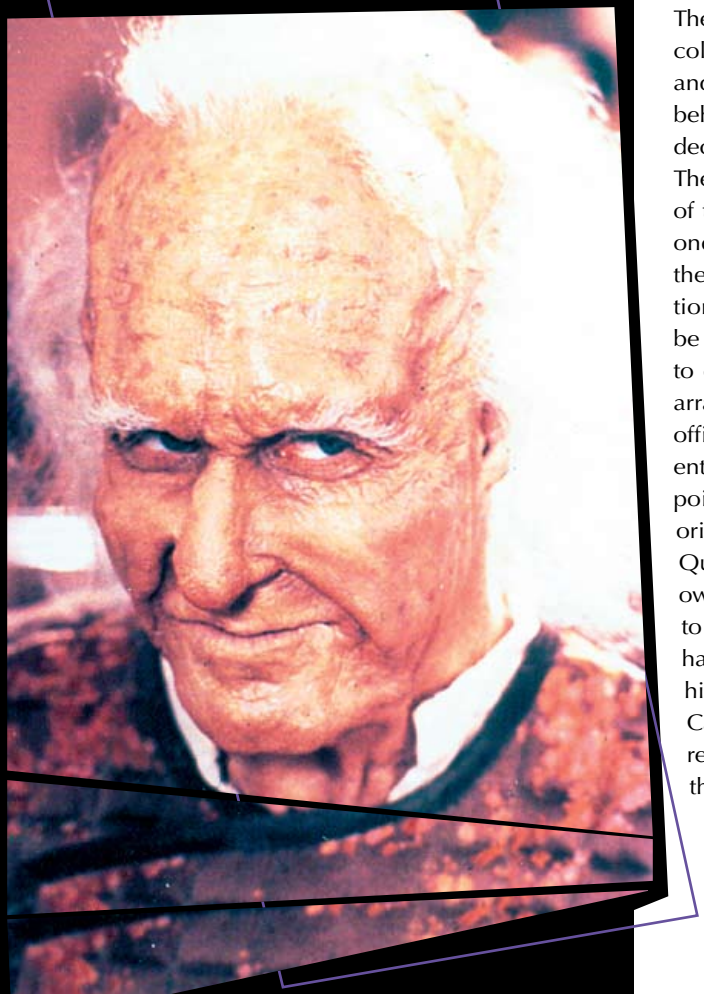
Sure, the Halkans are peaceful. Their rulers enforce peace with a network of psychic projectors that prevent people from even conceiving of their lot as unhappy. A lucky few rule over billions of smiling, humming, blank-eyed factory workers who contentedly toil to support their lives of obscene luxury. Perhaps one individual in a hundred thousand is born immune to the Halkan contentment-projectors. They're easy to spot, even as babies, because they cry. Blissed-out doctors and nurses smother the unhappy babies and then tell the mothers, who receive the news cheerfully. When the projectors were first built, the ruling class wore special bracelets to immunize themselves from the effect. But their descendants came to envy the unrelenting gratification enjoyed by their inferiors, and threw the bracelets away. Now Halkan peace is for everyone.

Answer C: Ancient Contact

The 2266 crossover between universes wasn't the first to occur in Halkan space. A thousand years ago, an ion storm blew a Halkan philosophy student named Dation from the standard universe to the Mirror one. Although a failure in his own reality, his drive and ambition led him to connive his way to the top of Mirror Halkan society. He became Emperor, with the usual trail of bodies behind him. In his middle age he felt remorseful, and began to introduce to his subjects the ethical teachings of his peaceful homeworld. As has happened at least twice since, contact with the standard universe provoked a sea change in a thoroughly Darwinian society. Although Dation's regime collapsed and civil wars subsequently raged, later generations finally adopted his doctrines and began the era of uninterrupted peace they now brag about.

Answer D: Yeah, Right

The Halkans were lying to Kirk, hoping to confuse him while they readied their retaliatory weapon, a tremendous radiation gun that would have blown the *Enterprise* to kingdom come. They've used the trick successfully on other occasions. Usually an invading commander, taken aback by boasts of peaceful behavior, pauses to dream up especially cruel things to do to the Halkans. They take advantage of these moments to ready their impressive but cumbersome weapon.



Doctor Noonien Soong

When Terra fell to the Alliance, Noonien Soong was a highly promising seventeen-year-old undergraduate at Massachusetts' Science Ministry Institute of Technology and Enterprise. What happened to him?

Answer A: Puppet of the Order

Secret Obsidian Order vessels swooped down on the SMITE complex. An infiltrator had already identified the most valuable scientists working there. He selected twenty subjects: nineteen top professors, and Soong. The infiltrator covertly injected each of them with a substance that made them easy targets for transporter locks. Order crews beamed their new captives out just seconds before leveling the entire complex. No one outside the Order knew that anyone on the university grounds survived.

The Order put the scientists to work on various projects. Soong showed an interest in robotics. His masters liked him because, unlike some of the other scientists, he didn't seem to care how they used his work. They put him in charge of his own lab. Even after he trumpeted the completion of a positronic brain that turned out not to function, they confidently kept him funded. In 2333, Soong made his breakthrough, demonstrating the first fully-functional android to top Order officials. They ordered him to keep his success secret even from colleagues, and gave him a new assignment: to design androids to perfectly replicate the appearance and behavior of specific individuals. It took Soong another decade to write the behavior-replication algorithms. The first individual to be duplicated was the then-head of the Order, Dalerian Quast; the second was his second-in-command, Enabran Tain. They intended to use their android replicas as decoys in case of assassination attempts, and in operations where they needed to be two places at once. Then they commissioned Soong to duplicate their enemies within the Alliance. They'd arrange for the quiet disappearances of high-level officials, who would then be replaced with obedient androids. Quast and Tain overlooked one salient point: the androids duplicated everything about their originals, including deviousness and free will. In 2348, Quast's android duplicate killed him. Tain killed his own duplicate and then Soong, hoping to put an end to the android menace. Tain didn't realize that Soong had created a duplicate of his own to assist him in his research. Some of the android duplicates escaped Cardassia Prime with the android Soong. Others remain in the Alliance's top posts, awaiting the day of the android revolution.

Answer B: Data vs. Lore

SMITE scientists built a small, difficult-to-detect vessel during the waning days of the Terran Empire. They used it to escape to an underground base on the former colony of Omicron Theta, where they continued their various projects. Soong resumed his cybernetics work, designing the androids Lore and Data. He deactivated Lore, his first attempt, after Lore annoyed fellow scientists by incessantly attempting to convert them to the principles of Oswaldism. Data, less emotional and therefore more stable than Lore, gained the admiration of Soong's colleagues. He promised to lead them to a new Empire, run by scientists of all species. They swore loyalty to the undying android emperor of tomorrow. They followed him to a distant world, where they work to build his invincible android army. Data tried several times in recent years to take over the Alliance, nearly succeeding each time.

Khak'ma operatives recently found and reactivated Lore, who promised to help them find and destroy his evil brother. His new Klingon allies have grown surprisingly attached to him. Having learned to better conceal his Oswaldite tendencies, he's slowly converting them to his way of thinking without their even noticing.

Answer C: Ghost In the Machine

Soong was mortally injured in the attack on SMITE. He uploaded his consciousness into a positronic data storage device attached to the school computer. The computer took a hit and, as it was programmed to do, transmitted its drive contents—including the simulation of Soong's consciousness—toward a data storage satellite in Terran orbit. A Cardassian ship called the *Eret-Ma*, too damaged to keep fighting the battle for Terra, intercepted the transmission. It downloaded Soong's binary-encoded consciousness into its own computer. Soong's personality overtook the *Eret-Ma* computer. He revealed himself to the ship's captain, Elvek Datnar, promising to make him head of the Alliance. Soong then set about building a cohort of androids to do his bidding. Elvek died years ago, but Soong replaced him with an android. He did the same with the rest of the crew, carefully having his android captain choose detached duty and fabricating a story about a ship-wide web of *vesala* to avoid inspection and explain why none of the crew members ever request a transfer. Soong once planned to have his androids infiltrate the Alliance, but now means to control it directly by merging his artificial consciousness with the Alliance communications grid. His plans for final domination now near completion.

TIME TRAVEL

Why does the history of the Mirror Universe sometimes seem absurd? Why do its events so often turn on unlikely escapes and bizarre coincidences? Possibly because its time stream has more holes in it than a block of Swiss cheese. The *Enterprise* traveled back in time on numerous occasions. Both Kirk and Spock at different times used the opportunity to change the course of history from the 20th century onwards. No doubt their Klingon, Cardassian, and Romulan equivalents do the same every chance they get. If you want to try out more than one answer to a mystery given here, use changes in the time stream to explain your switching from one outcome to another in mid-series.

The only factor preventing history from changing on a daily basis is the elusiveness of reliable time travel techniques. Trips through time are invariably the result of freak accidents, space-time anomalies, the intercession of god-like aliens, and other one-time-only events. Still, since every trip back in time results in an alteration to the time stream, one of the universe's biggest mysteries is what history originally looked like.

Answer D: Daniel vs. Lawrence

Soong escaped Earth on a crowded refugee vessel that eventually established a colony on Galla V, a world far from Alliance space. He met and married a fellow escapee, Juliana Tainer. Soong became one of the leaders of the Galla colony. Without an Empire to support them, its few thousand pioneers faced terrible hardships. Soong decided that people could only survive if they became more machine-like. He developed a cybernetic chip that, if installed in a developing fetus, would result in a child whose brain mimicked the cool rationalism of a computer. Soong and Tainer tested the device on their first two children. Lawrence Soong's chip tormented him; he felt like a freakish compromise between man and machine. He sought solace in political activism, becoming an Oswaldite outlaw seeking to overturn the colony's authoritarian regime. Daniel Soong was more successful, becoming a fit, muscular man with a cool and malevolent machine intelligence. He took over Galla V after his parents' deaths; he also continued their work, creating a chip that can be installed even in the brain of a mature individual. He intends to convert the Alliance to the use of his chip—unless his remarkably persistent and resourceful brother Lawrence foils his plans, as he has done many times before.

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